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Star-flowers (*Trientalis*) (*page 266*)

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THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

JOURNAL

EDITED BY BRADFORD TORREY

II

1850-September 15, 1851

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

Fair Haven Pond from the Cliffs

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JOURNAL

VOLUME II

THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

VOLUME II

I

1850 (ÆT. 32–33)[1]

THE Hindoos are more serenely and thoughtfully religious than the Hebrews. They have perhaps a purer, more independent and impersonal knowledge of God. Their religious books describe the first inquisitive and contemplative access to God; the Hebrew bible a conscientious return, a grosser and more personal repentance. Repentance is not a free and fair highway to God. A wise man will dispense with repentance. It is shocking and passionate. God prefers that you approach him thoughtful, not penitent, though you are the chief of sinners. It is only by forgetting yourself that you draw near to him.

The calmness and gentleness with which the Hindoo philosophers approach and discourse on forbidden themes is admirable.

[1] [A new book is begun here, but the first date is that of May 12, 1850, on p. 7 (p. 8 of the original). The first entries may or may not belong to this year.]

What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a loftier course through a purer stratum,—free from particulars, simple, universal. It rises on me like the full moon after the stars have come out, wading through some far summer stratum of the sky.

The Vedant teaches how, "by forsaking religious rites," the votary may "obtain purification of mind."

One wise sentence is worth the state of Massachusetts many times over.

The Vedas contain a sensible account of God.

The religion and philosophy of the Hebrews are those of a wilder and ruder tribe, wanting the civility and intellectual refinements and subtlety of the Hindoos.

Man flows at once to God as soon as the channel of purity, physical, intellectual, and moral, is open.

With the Hindoos virtue is an intellectual exercise, not a social and practical one. It is a knowing, not a doing.

I do not prefer one religion or philosophy to another. I have no sympathy with the bigotry and ignorance which make transient and partial and puerile distinctions between one man's faith or form of faith and another's,—as Christian and heathen. I pray to be delivered from narrowness, partiality, exaggeration, bigotry. To the philosopher all sects, all nations, are alike. I like Brahma, Hari, Buddha, the Great Spirit, as well as God.

[Part of leaf missing here.]

A page with as true and inevitable and deep a meaning as a hillside, a book which Nature shall own as her own flower, her own leaves; with whose leaves her own shall rustle in sympathy imperishable and russet; which shall push out with the skunk-cabbage in the spring. I am not offended by the odor of the skunk in passing by sacred places.[1] I am invigorated rather. It is a reminiscence of immortality borne on the gale. O thou partial world, when wilt thou know God? I would as soon transplant this vegetable to Polynesia or to heaven with me as the violet.

Shoes are commonly too narrow. If you should take off a gentleman's shoes, you would find that his foot was wider than his shoe. Think of his wearing such an engine! walking in it many miles year after year! A shoe which presses against the sides of the foot is to be condemned. To compress the foot like the Chinese is as bad as to compress the head like the Flatheads, for the head and the foot are one body. The narrow feet, — they greet each other on the two sides of the Pacific. A sensible man will not follow fashion in this respect, but reason. Better moccasins, or sandals, or even bare feet, than a tight shoe. A wise man will wear a shoe wide and large enough, shaped somewhat like the foot, and tied with a leather string, and so go his way in peace, letting his foot fall at every step.

When your shoe chafes your feet, put in a mullein leaf.

When I ask for a garment of a particular form, my tailoress tells me gravely, "They do not make them so

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 228; Riv. 280.]

now," and I find it difficult to get made what I want, simply because she cannot believe that I mean what I say; it surpasses her credulity. Properly speaking, my style is as fashionable as theirs. "They do not make them so now," as if she quoted the Fates! I am for a moment absorbed in thought, thinking, wondering who *they* are, where *they* live. It is some Oak Hall, O call, O. K., all correct establishment which she knows but I do not. Oliver Cromwell. I emphasize and in imagination italicize each word separately of that sentence to come at the meaning of it.[1]

Or you may walk into the foreign land of Bedford, where not even yet, after four or five, or even seven or eight, miles, does the sky shut down, but the airy and crystal dome of heaven arches high over all, when you did not suspect that there was so much daylight under its crystal dome, and from the hill eastward perchance see the small town of Bedford standing stately on the crest of a hill like some city of Belgrade with one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. I wonder if Mr. Fitch lives there among them.

How many noble men and women must have their abode there! So it seems, — I trust that so it is, — but I did not go into Bedford that time. But alas! I have been into a village before now, and there was not a man of a large soul in it. In what respect was it better than a village of prairie-dogs.[2] I mean to hint no reproach even by implica- [part of leaf torn off].

[1] [*Walden*, p. 27; Riv. 41, 42.]
[2] [See *Walden*, p. 185; Riv. 262.]

Sunday, May 12, 1850, visited the site of the Dustin house in the northwest part of Haverhill, now but a slight indentation in a corn-field, three or four feet deep, with an occasional brick and cellar-stone turned up in plowing. The owner, Dick Kimball, made much of the corn grown in this hole, some ears of which were sent to Philadelphia. The apple tree which is said to have stood north from the house at a considerable distance is gone. A brick house occupied by a descendant is visible from the spot, and there are old cellar-holes in the neighborhood, probably the sites of some of the other eight houses which were burned on that day. It is a question with some which is the site of the true Dustin house.

Also visited the same day an ancient garrison-house now occupied by Fred. Ayer, who said it was built one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty years ago by one Emerson, and that several oxen were killed by lightning while it was building. There was also a pear tree nearly as old as the house. It was built of larger and thicker and harder brick than are used nowadays, and on the whole looked more durable and still likely to stand a hundred years. The hard burnt blue-black ends of some of the bricks were so arranged as to checker the outside. He said it was considered the handsomest house in Haverhill when it was built, and people used to come up from town some two miles to see it. He thought that they were the original doors which we saw. There were but few windows, and most of them were about two feet and a half long and a foot or more wide, only to fire out of. The oven originally projected outside. There were two large fireplaces. I walked into

one, by stooping slightly, and looked up at the sky. Ayer said jokingly that some said they were so made to shoot wild geese as they flew over. The chains and hooks were suspended from a wooden bar high in the chimney. The timbers were of immense size.

Fourteen vessels in or to be in the port of Haverhill, laden with coal, lumber, lime, wood, and so forth. Boys go [to] the wharf with their fourpences to buy a bundle of laths to make a hen-house; none elsewhere to be had.

Saw two or three other garrison-houses. Mrs. Dustin was an Emerson, one of the family for whom I surveyed.

Measured a buttonwood tree in Haverhill, one of twenty and more set out about 1739 on the banks of the Merrimack. It was thirteen and eight twelfths feet in circumference at three and a half feet from the ground.

Jewett's steam mill is profitable, because the planing machine alone, while that is running, makes shavings and waste enough to feed the engine, to say nothing of the sawdust from the sawmill; and the engine had not required the least repair for several years. Perhaps, as there is not so much sawing and planing to be done in England, they therefore may not find steam so cheap as water.

A single gentle rain in the spring makes the grass look many shades greener.

It is wisest to live without any definite and recognized object from day to day, — any particular object, — for the world is round, and we are not to live on a tangent or

a radius to the sphere. As an old poet says, "though man proposeth, God disposeth all."

Our thoughts are wont to run in muddy or dusty ruts.

I too revive as does the grass after rain. We are never so flourishing, our day is never so fair, but that the sun may come out a little brighter through mists and we yearn to live a better life. What have we to boast of? We are made the very sewers, the cloacæ, of nature.

If the hunter has a taste for mud turtles and musk-rats and skunks and other such savage titbits, the fine lady indulges a taste for some form of potted cheese, or jelly made of a calf's foot, or anchovies from over the water, and they are even. He goes to the mill-pond, she to her preserve pot. I wonder how he, I wonder how I, can live this slimy, beastly kind of life, eating and drinking.[1]

The fresh foliage of the woods in May, when the leaves are about as big as a mouse's ear, putting out like taller grasses and herbs.

In all my rambles I have seen no landscape which can make me forget Fair Haven. I still sit on its Cliff in a new spring day, and look over the awakening woods and the river, and hear the new birds sing, with the same delight as ever. It is as sweet a mystery to me as ever, what this world is. Fair Haven Lake in the south, with its pine-covered island and its meadows, the hickories putting out fresh young yellowish leaves, and the oaks light-grayish ones, while the oven-bird thrums his sawyer-like strain, and the chewink rustles through the

[1] [*Walden*, p. 241; Riv. 340.]

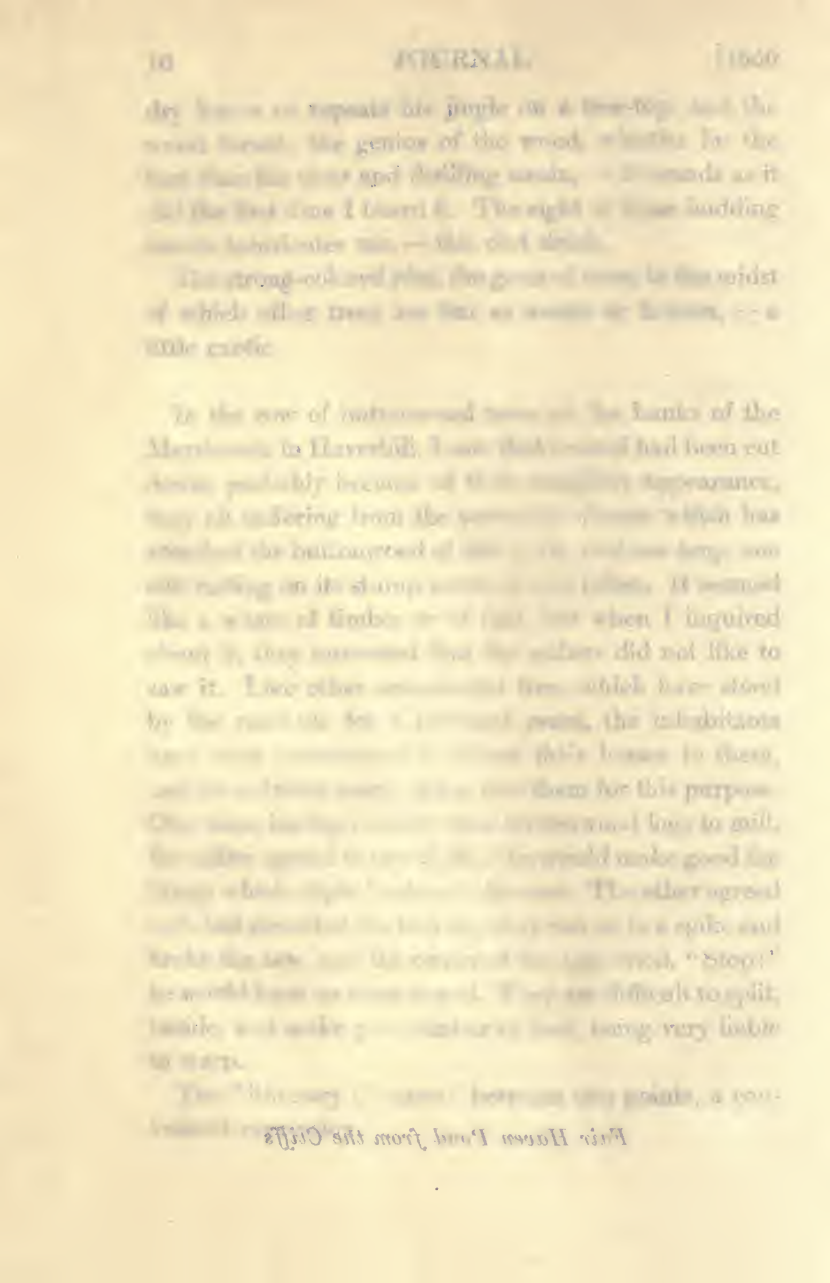
dry leaves or repeats his jingle on a tree-top, and the wood thrush, the genius of the wood, whistles for the first time his clear and thrilling strain, — it sounds as it did the first time I heard it. The sight of these budding woods intoxicates me, — this diet drink.

The strong-colored pine, the grass of trees, in the midst of which other trees are but as weeds or flowers, — a little exotic.

In the row of buttonwood trees on the banks of the Merrimack in Haverhill, I saw that several had been cut down, probably because of their unsightly appearance, they all suffering from the prevalent disease which has attacked the buttonwood of late years, and one large one still resting on its stump where it had fallen. It seemed like a waste of timber or of fuel, but when I inquired about it, they answered that the millers did not like to saw it. Like other ornamental trees which have stood by the roadside for a hundred years, the inhabitants have been accustomed to fasten their horses to them, and have driven many spikes into them for this purpose. One man, having carried some buttonwood logs to mill, the miller agreed to saw them if he would make good the injury which might be done to his saw. The other agreed to it, but almost at the first clip they ran on to a spike and broke the saw, and the owner of the logs cried, "Stop!" he would have no more sawed. They are difficult to split, beside, and make poor timber at best, being very liable to warp.

The "itinerary distance" between two points, a convenient expression.

Fair Haven Pond from the Cliffs



Humboldt says, "It is still undetermined where life is most abundant: whether on the earth or in the fathomless depths of the ocean."

It was a *mirage*, what in Sanscrit, according to Humboldt, is called "the thirst of the gazelle."

Nothing memorable was ever accomplished in a prosaic mood of mind. The heroes and discoverers have found true more than was previously believed, only when they were expecting and dreaming of something more than their contemporaries dreamed of, — when they were in a frame of mind prepared in some measure for the truth.

Referred to the world's standard, the hero, the discoverer, is insane, its greatest men are all insane. At first the world does not respect its great men. Some rude and simple nations go to the other extreme and reverence all kinds of insanity. Humboldt says, speaking of Columbus approaching the New World: "The grateful coolness of the evening air, the ethereal purity of the starry firmament, the balmy fragrance of flowers, wafted to him by the land breeze, all led him to suppose (as we are told by Herrera, in the Decades (5)), that he was approaching the garden of Eden, the sacred abode of our first parents. The Orinoco seemed to him one of the four rivers which, according to the venerable tradition of the ancient world, flowed from Paradise, to water and divide the surface of the earth, newly adorned with plants."

Expeditions for the discovery of El Dorado, and also

of the Fountain of Youth, led to real, though perhaps not compensatory, discoveries.[1]

I have heard my brother playing on his flute at evening half a mile off through the houses of the village, every note with perfect distinctness. It seemed a more beautiful communication with me than the sending up of a rocket would have been. So, if I mistake not, the sound of blasting rocks has been heard from down the river as far as Lowell, — some twenty miles by its course, — where they were making a deep cut for the railroad.

The sand cherry (*Prunus depressa* Pursh., *Cerasus pumila* Mx.) grew about my door, and near the end of May enlivened my yard with its umbels arranged cylindrically about its short branches. In the fall, weighed down with the weight of its large and handsome cherries, it fell over in wreath-like rays on every side. I tasted them out of compliment to nature, but I never learned to love them.[2]

If the long-continued rains cause the seeds to rot in the ground and destroy the potatoes in the low lands, they are good for the grass on the uplands, though the farmers say it is not so sweet.[3]

As I walked, I was intoxicated with the slight spicy odor of the hickory buds and the bruised bark of the black birch, and, in the fall, the pennyroyal.

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 121; Riv. 143, 144.] [2] [*Walden*, p. 126; Riv. 178.]
[3] [*Walden*, p. 145; Riv. 206.]

Many a time I have expected to find a woodchuck, or rabbit, or a gray squirrel, when it was the ground-robin rustling the leaves.

I have been surprised to discover the amount and the various kinds of life which a single shallow swamp will sustain. On the south side of the pond, not more than a quarter of a mile from it, is a small meadow of ten or a dozen acres in the woods, considerably lower than Walden, and which by some is thought to be fed by the former by a subterranean outlet, — which is very likely, for its shores are quite springy and its supply of water is abundant and unfailing, — indeed tradition says that a sawmill once stood over its outlet, though its whole extent, including its sources, is not more than I have mentioned, — a meadow through which the Fitchburg Railroad passes by a very high causeway, which required many a carload of sand, where the laborers for a long time seemed to make no progress, for the sand settled so much in the night that by morning they were where they were the day before, and finally the weight of the sand forced upward the adjacent crust of the meadow with the trees on it many feet, and cracked it for some rods around. It is a wet and springy place throughout the summer, with a ditch-like channel, and in one part water stands the year round, with cat-o'-nine-tails and tussocks and muskrats' cabins rising above it, where good cranberries may be raked if you are careful to anticipate the frost which visits this cool hollow unexpectedly early. Well, as I was saying, I heard a splashing in the shallow and muddy water and stood awhile to observe

the cause of it. Again and again I heard and saw the commotion, but could not guess the cause of it, — what kind of life had its residence in that insignificant pool. We sat down on the hillside. Ere long a muskrat came swimming by as if attracted by the same disturbance, and then another and another, till three had passed, and I began to suspect that they were at the bottom of it. Still ever and anon I observed the same commotion in the waters over the same spot, and at length I observed the snout of some creature slyly raised above the surface after each commotion, as if to see if it were observed by foes, and then but a few rods distant I saw another snout above the water and began to divine the cause of the disturbance. Putting off my shoes and stockings, I crept stealthily down the hill and waded out slowly and noiselessly about a rod from the firm land, keeping behind the tussocks, till I stood behind the tussock near which I had observed the splashing. Then, suddenly stooping over it, I saw through the shallow but muddy water that there was a mud turtle there, and thrusting in my hand at once caught him by the claw, and, quicker than I can tell it, heaved him high and dry ashore; and there came out with him a large pout just dead and partly devoured, which he held in his jaws. It was the pout in his flurry and the turtle in his struggles to hold him fast which had created the commotion. There he had lain, probably buried in the mud at the bottom up to his eyes, till the pout came sailing over, and then this musky lagune had put forth in the direction of his ventral fins, expanding suddenly under the influence of a more than vernal heat, — there

are sermons in stones, aye and mud turtles at the bottoms of the pools, — in the direction of his ventral fins, his tender white belly, where he kept no eye; and the minister squeaked his last.[1] Oh, what an eye was there, my countrymen! buried in mud up to the lids, meditating on what? sleepless at the bottom of the pool, at the top of the bottom, directed heavenward, in no danger from motes. Pouts expect their foes not from below. Suddenly a mud volcano swallowed him up, seized his midriff; he fell into those relentless jaws from which there is no escape, which relax not their hold even in death.[2] There the pout might calculate on remaining until nine days after the head was cut off. Sculled through Heywood's shallow meadow, not thinking of foes, looking through the water up into the sky. I saw his [the turtle's] brother sunning and airing his broad back like a ship bottom up which had been scuttled, — foundered at sea. I had no idea that there was so much going on in Heywood's meadow.

The pickerel commonly lie perfectly still at night, like sticks, in very shallow water near the shore near a brook's mouth. I have seen a large one with a deep white wound from a spear, cutting him half in two, unhealed and unhealable, fast asleep, and forked him into my boat. I have struck a pickerel sound asleep and knew that I cut him almost in two, and the next moment heard him go ashore several rods off; for being thus awakened in their dreams they shoot off with one impulse, intending only to abandon those parts, without considering exactly to what places they

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. i, p. 475.] [2] [Channing, p. 298.]

shall go. One night a small pickerel, which the boat had probably struck in his sleep, leaped into the boat and so was secured without a wound.

The chub is a soft fish and tastes like boiled brown paper salted.

I was as interested in the discovery of limestone as if it had been gold, and wondered that I had never thought of it before. Now all things seemed to radiate round limestone, and I saw how the farmers lived near to, or far from, a locality of limestone. I detected it sometimes in walls, and surmised from what parts it was probably carted; or when I looked down into an old deserted well, I detected it in the wall, and found where the first settlers had quarried it extensively. I read a new page in the history of these parts in the old limestone quarries and kilns where the old settlers found the materials of their houses; and I considered that, since it was found so profitable even at Thomaston to burn lime with coal dust, perchance these quarries might be worked again.[1]

When the rocks were covered with snow, I even uncovered them with my hands, that I might observe their composition and strata, and thought myself lucky when the sun had laid one bare for me; but [now] that they are all uncovered I pass by without noticing them. There is a time for everything.

We are never prepared to believe that our ancestors lifted large stones or built thick walls. I find that I must have supposed that they built their bank walls of such as a single man could handle. For since we have put

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. v, June 10, 1853.]

their lives behind us we can think of no sufficient motive for such exertion. How can their works be so visible and permanent and themselves so transient? When I see a stone which it must have taken many yoke of oxen to move, lying in a bank wall which was built two hundred years ago, I am curiously surprised, because it suggests an energy and force of which we have no memorials. Where are the traces of the corresponding moral and intellectual energy? I am not prepared to believe that a man lived here so long ago who could elevate into a wall and properly aline a rock of great size and fix it securely, — such an Archimedes. I walk over the old corn-fields, it is true, where the grassy corn-hills still appear in the woods, but there are no such traces of them there. Again, we are wont to think that our ancestors were all stalwart men, because only their most enduring works have come down to us. I think that the man who lifted so large a rock in the course of his ordinary work should have had a still larger for his monument.

I noticed a singular instance of ventriloquism to-day in a male chewink singing on the top of a young oak. It was difficult to believe that the last part of his strain, the concluding jingle, did not proceed from a different quarter, a woodside many rods off. *Hip-you, he-he-he-he.* It was long before I was satisfied that the last part was not the answer of his mate given in exact time. I endeavored to get between the two; indeed, I seemed to be almost between them already.

I have not seen Walden so high for many years; it is within four feet of the pond-hole in Hubbard's woods.

The river is higher than it has been at this season for many years.

When the far mountains are invisible, the near ones look the higher.

The oldest nature is elastic. I just felt myself raised upon the swell of the eternal ocean, which came rolling this way to land.

When my eye ranges over some thirty miles of this globe's surface, — an eminence green and waving, with sky and mountains to bound it, — I am richer than Crœsus.

The variously colored blossoms of the shrub oaks now, in May, hanging gracefully like ear-drops, or the similar blossoms of the large oaks.

I have noticed the effect of a flag set up on a hill in the country. It tames the landscape, subdues it to itself. The hill looks as if it were a military post. Our green, wild country landscape is gathered under the folds of a flag.

A lively appearance is imparted to the landscape as seen from Nawshawtuct, by the flood on the meadows, — by the alternation of land and water, of green and of light colors. The frequent causeways, and the hedgerows (?) jutting into the meadows, and the islands, have an appearance full of light and life.

To-day, May 31st, a red and white cow, being uneasy, broke out of the steam-mill pasture and crossed the bridge and broke into Elijah Wood's grounds. When he endeavored to drive her out by the bars, she boldly took to the water, wading first through the meadows

full of ditches, and swam across the river, about forty rods wide at this time, and landed in her own pasture again. She was a buffalo crossing her Mississippi. This exploit conferred some dignity on the herd in my eyes, already dignified, and reflectedly on the river, which I looked on as a kind of Bosphorus.

I love to see the domestic animals reassert their native rights, — any evidence that they have not lost their original wild habits and vigor.[1]

There is a sweet wild world which lies along the strain of the wood thrush — the rich intervales which border the stream of its song — more thoroughly genial to my nature than any other.[2]

The blossoms of the tough and vivacious shrub oak are very handsome.

I visited a retired, now almost unused, graveyard in Lincoln to-day, where five British soldiers lie buried who fell on the 19th April, '75. Edmund Wheeler, grandfather of William, who lived in the old house now pulled down near the present, went over the next day and carted them to this ground. A few years ago one Felch, a phrenologist, by leave of the selectmen dug up and took away two skulls. The skeletons were very large, probably those of grenadiers. William Wheeler, who was present, told me this. He said that he had heard old Mr. Child, who lived opposite, say that when one soldier was shot he leaped right up his full length out of the ranks and fell dead; and he, William Wheeler, saw a bullet-hole through and through one of the skulls.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 234; Riv. 287.] [2] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 276.]

Close by stood a stone with this inscription: —

In memory of
Sippio Brister
a man of Colour
who died
Nov 1. 1820
Æt. 64.

But that is not telling us that he lived.[1]

There was one Newell, a tailor, his neighbor, who became a Universalist minister. Breed put on his sign:—

Tailoring and barbering done with speed
By John C Newell & John C Breed.[2]

The water was over the turnpike below Master Cheney's when I returned (May 31st, 1850).

[A third of a page torn out here.]

that these fences, to a considerable extent, will be found to mark natural divisions, especially if the land is not very minutely divided, — mowing (upland and meadow) pasture, woodland, and the different kinds of tillage. There will be found in the farmer's motive for setting a fence here or there some conformity to natural limits. These artificial divisions no doubt have the effect of increasing the area and variety to the traveller. These various fields taken together appear more extensive than a single prairie of the same size would. If the divisions corresponded [A third of a page torn out here.]

[1] [*Walden*, p. 284; Riv. 399.]

[2] [This in regard to Breed and Newell is written in a fine hand at the top of the page, and probably belonged with something on the part torn out.]

The year has many seasons more than are recognized in the almanac. There is that time about the first of June, the beginning of summer, when the buttercups blossom in the now luxuriant grass and I am first reminded of mowing and of the dairy. Every one will have observed different epochs. There is the time when they begin to drive cows to pasture, — about the 20th of May, — observed by the farmer, but a little arbitrary year by year. Cows spend their winters in barns and cow-yards, their summers in pastures. In summer, therefore, they may low with emphasis, "To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new." I sometimes see a neighbor or two united with their boys and hired men to drive their cattle to some far-off country pasture, fifty or sixty miles distant in New Hampshire, early in the morning, with their sticks and dogs. It is a memorable time with the farmers' boys, and frequently their first journey from home. The herdsman in some mountain pasture is expecting them. And then in the fall, when they go up to drive them back, they speculate as to whether Janet or Brindle will know them. I heard such a boy exclaim on such an occasion, when the calf of the spring returned a heifer, as he stroked her side, "She knows me, father; she knows me." Driven up to be the cattle on a thousand hills.

I once set fire to the woods. Having set out, one April day, to go to the sources of Concord River in a boat with a single companion, meaning to camp on the bank at night or seek a lodging in some neighboring country inn or farmhouse, we took fishing tackle with us that we might fitly procure our food from the stream, Indian-

like. At the shoemaker's near the river, we obtained a match, which we had forgotten. Though it was thus early in the spring, the river was low, for there had not been much rain, and we succeeded in catching a mess of fish sufficient for our dinner before we had left the town, and by the shores of Fair Haven Pond we proceeded to cook them. The earth was uncommonly dry, and our fire, kindled far from the woods in a sunny recess in the hillside on the east of the pond, suddenly caught the dry grass of the previous year which grew about the stump on which it was kindled. We sprang to extinguish it at first with our hands and feet, and then we fought it with a board obtained from the boat, but in a few minutes it was beyond our reach; being on the side of a hill, it spread rapidly upward, through the long, dry, wiry grass interspersed with bushes.

"Well, where will this end?" asked my companion. I saw that it might be bounded by Well Meadow Brook on one side, but would, perchance, go to the village side of the brook. "It will go to town," I answered. While my companion took the boat back down the river, I set out through the woods to inform the owners and to raise the town. The fire had already spread a dozen rods on every side and went leaping and crackling wildly and irreclaimably toward the wood. That way went the flames with wild delight, and we felt that we had no control over the demonic creature to which we had given birth. We had kindled many fires in the woods before, burning a clear space in the grass, without ever kindling such a fire as this.

As I ran toward the town through the woods, I could

see the smoke over the woods behind me marking the spot and the progress of the flames. The first farmer whom I met driving a team, after leaving the woods, inquired the cause of the smoke. I told him. "Well," said he, "it is none of my stuff," and drove along. The next I met was the owner in his field, with whom I returned at once to the woods, running all the way. I had already run two miles. When at length we got into the neighborhood of the flames, we met a carpenter who had been hewing timber, an infirm man who had been driven off by the fire, fleeing with his axe. The farmer returned to hasten more assistance. I, who was spent with running, remained. What could I do alone against a front of flame half a mile wide?

I walked slowly through the wood to Fair Haven Cliff, climbed to the highest rock, and sat down upon it to observe the progress of the flames, which were rapidly approaching me, now about a mile distant from the spot where the fire was kindled. Presently I heard the sound of the distant bell giving the alarm, and I knew that the town was on its way to the scene. Hitherto I had felt like a guilty person, — nothing but shame and regret. But now I settled the matter with myself shortly. I said to myself: "Who are these men who are said to be the owners of these woods, and how am I related to them? I have set fire to the forest, but I have done no wrong therein, and now it is as if the lightning had done it. These flames are but consuming their natural food." (It has never troubled me from that day to this more than if the lightning had done it. The trivial fishing was all that disturbed me and disturbs me still.) So shortly I

settled it with myself and stood to watch the approaching flames.[1] It was a glorious spectacle, and I was the only one there to enjoy it. The fire now reached the base of the cliff and then rushed up its sides. The squirrels ran before it in blind haste, and three pigeons dashed into the midst of the smoke. The flames flashed up the pines to their tops, as if they were powder.

When I found I was about to be surrounded by the fire, I retreated and joined the forces now arriving from the town. It took us several hours to surround the flames with our hoes and shovels and by back fires subdue them. In the midst of all I saw the farmer whom I first met, who had turned indifferently away saying it was none of his stuff, striving earnestly to save his corded wood, his stuff, which the fire had already seized and which it after all consumed.

It burned over a hundred acres or more and destroyed much young wood. When I returned home late in the day, with others of my townsmen, I could not help noticing that the crowd who were so ready to condemn the individual who had kindled the fire did not sympathize with the owners of the wood, but were in fact highly elate and as it were thankful for the opportunity which had afforded them so much sport; and it was only half a dozen owners, so called, though not all of them, who looked sour or grieved, and I felt that I had a deeper interest in the woods, knew them better and should feel their loss more, than any or all of them. The farmer whom I had first conducted to the woods was obliged to ask me the shortest way back, through his own lot.

[1] [See p. 40.]

Why, then, should the half-dozen owners [and] the individuals who set the fire alone feel sorrow for the loss of the wood, while the rest of the town have their spirits raised? Some of the owners, however, bore their loss like men, but other some declared behind my back that I was a "damned rascal;" and a flibbertigibbet or two, who crowed like the old cock, shouted some reminiscences of "burnt woods" from safe recesses for some years after. I have had nothing to say to any of them. The locomotive engine has since burned over nearly all the same ground and more, and in some measure blotted out the memory of the previous fire. For a long time after I had learned this lesson I marvelled that while matches and tinder were contemporaries the world was not consumed; why the houses that have hearths were not burned before another day; if the flames were not as hungry now as when I waked them. I at once ceased to regard the owners and my own fault, — if fault there was any in the matter, — and attended to the phenomenon before me, determined to make the most of it. To be sure, I felt a little ashamed when I reflected on what a trivial occasion this had happened, that at the time I was no better employed than my townsmen.

That night I watched the fire, where some stumps still flamed at midnight in the midst of the blackened waste, wandering through the woods by myself; and far in the night I threaded my way to the spot where the fire had taken, and discovered the now broiled fish, — which had been dressed, — scattered over the burnt grass.

This has been a cool day, though the first of summer.

The prospect of the meadows from Lee's Hill was very fine. I observe that the shadows of the trees are very distinct and heavy in such a day, falling on the fresh grass. They are as obvious as the trees themselves by mid-afternoon. Commonly we do not make much account of the distinct shadows of objects in the landscape.

What is bare and unsightly is covered by the water now. The verdure seems to spring directly from its bosom; there are no stems nor roots. The meadows are so many mirrors reflecting the light, — toward sunset dazzlingly bright.

I visited this afternoon (June 3d) Goodman's Hill in Sudbury, going through Lincoln over Sherman's Bridge and Round Hill, and returning through the Corner. It probably affords the best view of Concord River meadows of any hill. The horizon is very extensive as it is, and if the top were cleared so that you could get the western view, it would be one of the most extensive seen from any hill in the county. The most imposing horizons are those which are seen from tops of hills rising out of a river valley. The prospect even from a low hill has something majestic in it in such a case. The landscape is a vast amphitheatre rising to its rim in the horizon. There is a good view of Lincoln lying high up in among the hills. You see that it is the highest town hereabouts, and hence its fruit. The river at this time looks as large as the Hudson. I think that a river-valley town is much the handsomest and largest-featured, — like Concord and Lancaster, for instance, natural centres. Upon the

hills of Bolton, again, the height of land between the Concord and Nashua, I have seen how the peach flourishes. Nobscot, too, is quite imposing as seen from the west side of Goodman's Hill. On the western side of a continuation of this hill is Wadsworth's battle-field.[1]

Returning, I saw in Sudbury twenty-five nests of the new (cliff?) swallow under the eaves of a barn. They seemed particularly social and loquacious neighbors, though their voices are rather squeaking. Their nests, built side by side, looked somewhat like large hornets' nests, enough so to prove a sort of connection. Their activity, sociability, and chattiness make them fit pensioners and neighbors of man — summer companions — for the barn-yard.

The last of May and the first of June the farmers are everywhere planting their corn and beans and potatoes.

To-day, June 4th, I have been tending a burning in the woods. Ray was there. It is a pleasant fact that you will know no man long, however low in the social scale, however poor, miserable, intemperate, and worthless he may appear to be, a mere burden to society, but you will find at last that there is something which he understands and can do better than any other. I was pleased to hear that one man had sent Ray as the one who had had the most experience in setting fires of any man in Lincoln. He had experience and skill as a burner of brush.

[1] [Where Captain Samuel Wadsworth fell in a battle with the Indians, April 18, 1676.]

You must burn against the wind always, and burn slowly. When the fire breaks over the hoed line, a little system and perseverance will accomplish more toward quelling it than any man would believe. It fortunately happens that the experience acquired is oftentimes worth more than the wages. When a fire breaks out in the woods, and a man fights it too near and on the side, in the heat of the moment, without the systematic coöperation of others, he is disposed to think it a desperate case, and that this relentless fiend will run through the forest till it is glutted with food; but let the company rest from their labors a moment, and then proceed more deliberately and systematically, giving the fire a wider berth, and the company will be astonished to find how soon and easily they will subdue it. The woods themselves furnish one of the best weapons with which to contend with the fires that destroy them, — a pitch pine bough. It is the best instrument to thrash it with. There are few men who do not love better to give advice than to give assistance.

However large the fire, let a few men go to work deliberately but perseveringly to rake away the leaves and hoe off the surface of the ground at a convenient distance from the fire, while others follow with pine boughs to thrash it with when it reaches the line, and they will finally get round it and subdue it, and will be astonished at their own success.

A man who is about to burn his field in the midst of woods should rake off the leaves and twigs for the breadth of a rod at least, making no large heaps near the outside, and then plow around it several furrows and

break them up with hoes, and set his fire early in the morning, before the wind rises.

As I was fighting the fire to-day, in the midst of the roaring and crackling, — for the fire seems to snort like a wild horse, — I heard from time to time the dying strain, the last sigh, the fine, clear, shrill scream of agony, as it were, of the trees breathing their last, probably the heated air or the steam escaping from some chink. At first I thought it was some bird, or a dying squirrel's note of anguish, or steam escaping from the tree. You sometimes hear it on a small scale in the log on the hearth. When a field is burned over, the squirrels probably go into the ground. How foreign is the yellow pine to the green woods — and what business has it here?

The fire stopped within a few inches of a partridge's nest to-day, June 4th, whom we took off in our hands and found thirteen creamy-colored eggs. I started up a woodcock when I went to a rill to drink, at the westernmost angle of R. W. E.'s wood-lot.

To-night, June 5th, after a hot day, I hear the first peculiar summer breathing of the frogs.

When all is calm, a small whirlwind will suddenly lift up the blazing leaves and let them fall beyond the line, and set all the woods in a blaze in a moment. Or some slight almost invisible cinder, seed of fire, will be wafted from the burnt district on to the dry turf which covers the surface and fills the crevices of many rocks, and there it will catch as in tinder, and smoke and smoulder, perchance, for half an hour, heating several square yards of ground where yet no fire is

visible, until it spreads to the leaves and the wind fans it into a blaze.

Men go to a fire for entertainment. When I see how eagerly men will run to a fire, whether in warm or in cold weather, by day or by night, dragging an engine at their heels, I am astonished to perceive how good a purpose the love of excitement is made to serve. What other force, pray, what offered pay, what disinterested neighborliness could ever effect so much? No, these are boys who are to be dealt with, and these are the motives that prevail. There is no old man or woman dropping into the grave but covets excitement.

Yesterday, when I walked to Goodman's Hill, it seemed to me that the atmosphere was never so full of fragrance and spicy odors. There is a great variety in the fragrance of the apple blossoms as well as their tints. Some are quite spicy. The air seemed filled with the odor of ripe strawberries, though it is quite too early for them. The earth was not only fragrant but sweet and spicy to the smell, reminding us of Arabian gales and what mariners tell of the spice islands. The first of June, when the lady's-slipper and the wild pink have come out in sunny places on the hillsides, then the summer is begun according to the clock of the seasons.

Here it is the 8th of June, and the grass is growing apace. In the front yards of the village they are already beginning to cut it. The fields look luxuriant and verdurous, but, as the weather is warmer, the atmosphere is not so clear. In distant woods the partridge sits on

her eggs, and at evening the frogs begin to dream and boys begin to bathe in the river and ponds.

Cultivate the habit of early rising. It is unwise to keep the head long on a level with the feet.

The cars come and go with such regularity and precision, and the whistle and rumble are heard so far, that town clocks and family clocks are already half dispensed with, and it is easy to foresee that one extensive well-conducted and orderly institution like a railroad will keep time and order for a whole country. The startings and arrivals of the cars are the epochs in a village day.[1]

Not till June can the grass be said to be waving in the fields. When the frogs dream, and the grass waves, and the buttercups toss their heads, and the heat disposes to bathe in the ponds and streams, then is summer begun.

June 9th, 1850, Walden is still rising, though the rains have ceased and the river has fallen very much. I see the pollen of the pitch pine now beginning to cover the surface of the pond. Most of the pines at the north-northwest end have none, and on some there is only one pollen-bearing flower.

I saw a striped snake which the fire in the woods had killed, stiffened and partially blackened by the flames, with its body partly coiled up and raised from the ground,

[1] [*Walden*, p. 130; Riv. 184, 185.]

and its head still erect as if ready to dart out its tongue and strike its foe. No creature can exhibit more venom than a snake, even when it is not venomous, strictly speaking.

The fire ascended the oak trees very swiftly by the moss which fringed them.

It has a singular effect on us when we hear the geologist apply his terms to Judea, — speak of "limestone" and "blocks of trap and conglomerate, boulders of sandstone and quartz" there. Or think of a chemical analysis of the water of the Dead Sea!

The pitch and white pines are two years or more maturing their seed.

Certain rites are practiced by the Smrities (among the Hindoos) at the digging of wells.

In early times the Brahmans, though they were the legislators of India, possessed no executive power and lived in poverty; yet they were for the most part independent and respected.

Galbraith's Math. Tables, Edinburgh, 1834. For descriptions of instruments he refers to Jones's edition of Adam's Geom. and Graphical Essays, Biot's Traité d'Astronomie Physique, Base du Système Métrique, Woodhouse's, Vince's, and Pearson's Treatises of Astronomy. For problems connected with trigonometrical surveying, to the third volume of Hutton's Course of Math. by Dr. O. Gregory, Baron Zach's work on the Attraction of Mountains, the Base du Système de Métrique Décimal, and Puissant's Géodesie.

Olive or red seems the fittest color for a man, a deni-

zen of the woods. The *pale white man!* I do not wonder that the African pitied him.[1]

The white pine cones are now two inches long, curved sickle-like from the topmost branches, reminding you of the tropical trees which bear their fruit at their heads.[2]

The life in us is like the water in the river; it may rise this year higher than ever it was known to before and flood the uplands — even this may be the eventful year — and drown out all our muskrats.[3]

There [are] as many strata at different levels of life as there are leaves in a book. Most men probably have lived in two or three. When on the higher levels we can remember the lower levels, but when on the lower we cannot remember the higher.

My imagination, my love and reverence and admiration, my sense of the miraculous, is not so excited by any event as by the remembrance of my youth. Men talk about Bible miracles because there is no miracle in their lives. Cease to gnaw that crust. There is ripe fruit over your head.

Woe to him who wants a companion, for he is unfit to be the companion even of himself.

We inspire friendship in men when we have contracted friendship with the gods.

When we cease to sympathize with and to be personally related to men, and begin to be universally related, then we are capable of inspiring others with the sentiment of love for us.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 226; Riv. 277.]

[2] I find that they are last year's. The white pine has not blossomed.

[3] [*Walden*, p. 366; Riv. 513.]

We hug the earth. How rarely we mount! How rarely we climb a tree! We might get a little higher, methinks. That pine would make us dizzy. You can see the mountains from it as you never did before.[1]

Shall not a man have his spring as well as the plants?

The halo around the shadow is visible both morning and evening.[2]

After this and some other fires in the woods which I helped to put out, a more effectual system by which to quell them occurred to me. When the bell rings, hundreds will run to a fire in the woods without carrying any implement, and then waste much time after they get there either in doing nothing or what is worse than nothing, having come mainly out of curiosity, it being as interesting to see it burn as to put it out. I thought that it would be well if forty or fifty men in every country town should enroll themselves into a company for this purpose and elect suitable officers. The town should provide a sufficient number of rakes, hoes, and shovels, which it should be the duty of certain of the company to convey to [the] woods in a wagon, together with the drum, on the first alarm, people being unwilling to carry their own tools for fear they will be lost. When the captain or one of the numerous vice-captains arrives, having inspected the fire and taken his measures, let him cause the roll to be called, however the men may be engaged, and just take a turn or two with his men to form them into sections and see where they are. Then

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 244, 245; Riv. 300.]

[2] [*Walden*, pp. 224, 225; Riv. 316.]

he can appoint and equip his rake-men and his hoe-men and his bough-men, and drop them at the proper places, always retaining the drummer and a scout; and when he has learned through his scout that the fire has broken out in a new place, he, by beat of drum, can take up one or two men of each class — as many as can be spared — and repair to the scene of danger.

One of my friends suggests instead of the drum some delicious music, adding that then he would come. It might be well, to refresh the men when wearied with work, and cheer them on their return. Music is the proper regulator.

So, far in the East, among the Yezidis, or Worshippers of the Devil, so called, and the Chaldæans, and so forth, you may hear these remarkable disputations on doctrinal points.[1]

Any reverence, even for a material thing, proceeds from an elevation of character. Layard, speaking of the reverence for the sun exhibited by the Yezidis, or Worshippers of the Devil, says: "They are accustomed to kiss the object on which its first beams fall; and I have frequently, when travelling in their company at sunrise, observed them perform this ceremony. For fire, as symbolic, they have nearly the same reverence; they never spit into it, but frequently pass their hands through the flame, kiss them, and rub them over their right eyebrow, or sometimes over the whole face."

Who taught the oven-bird to conceal her nest? It is

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 54; Riv. 62.]

on the ground, yet out of sight. What cunning there is in nature! No man could have arranged it more artfully for the purpose of concealment. Only the escape of the bird betrays it.

I observe to-night, June 15th, the air over the river by the Leaning Hemlocks filled with myriads of newly fledged insects drifting and falling as it were like snowflakes from the maples, only not so white. Now they drift up the stream, now down, while the river below is dimpled with the fishes rising to swallow the innumerable insects which have fallen [into] it and are struggling with it. I saw how He fed his fish. They, swimming in the dark nether atmosphere of the river, rose lazily to its surface to swallow such swimmers of the light upper atmosphere as sank to its bottom.[1]

I picked up to-day the lower jaw of a hog, with white and sound teeth and tusks, which reminded me that there was an animal health and vigor distinct from the spiritual health. This animal succeeded by other means than temperance and purity.[2]

There are thirty-eight lighthouses in Massachusetts. The light on the Highlands of Neversink is visible the greatest distance, *viz.* thirty miles. There are two there, one revolving, one not.

The fantastic open light crosses which the limbs of the larch make, seen against the sky, of the sky-blue color its foliage.

In a swamp where the trees stand up to their knees, two or three feet deep, in the fine bushes as in a moss bed.

[1] *Vide* Kirby and Spence, vol. i. [2] [*Walden*, p. 242; Riv. 341.]

The arbor-vitæ fans, rich, heavy, elaborate, like bead-work.

June 20. I can see from my window three or four cows in a pasture on the side of Fair Haven Hill, a mile and a half distant. There is but one tree in the pasture, and they are all collected and now reposing in its shade, which, as it is early though sultry, is extended a good way along the ground. It makes a pretty landscape. That must have been an epoch in the history of the cow when they discovered to stand in the shadow of a tree. I wonder if they are wise enough to recline on the north side of it, that they may not be disturbed so soon. It shows the importance of leaving trees for shade in the pastures as well as for beauty. There is a long black streak, and in it the cows are collected. How much more they will need this shelter at noon! It is a pleasant life they lead in the summer, — roaming in well-watered pastures, grazing, and chewing the cud in the shade, — quite a philosophic life and favorable for contemplation, not like their pent-up winter life in close and foul barns. If only they could say as on the prairies, "To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Cattle and horses, however, retain many of their wild habits or instincts wonderfully. The seeds of instinct are preserved under their thick hides, like seeds in the bowels of the earth, an indefinite period.[1] I have heard of a horse which his master could not catch in his pasture when the first snowflakes were falling, who persisted in wintering out. As he persisted in keeping out

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 234; Riv. 287.]

of his reach, his master finally left him. When the snow had covered the ground three or four inches deep, the horse pawed it away to come at the grass, — just as the wild horses of Michigan do, who are turned loose by their Indian masters, — and so he picked up a scanty subsistence. By the next day he had had enough of free life and pined for his stable, and so suffered himself to be caught.

A blacksmith, my neighbor, heard a great clattering noise the other day behind his shop, and on going out found that his mare and his neighbor the pumpmaker's were fighting. They would run at one another, then turn round suddenly and let their heels fly. The rattling of their hoofs one against the other was the noise he heard. They repeated this several times with intervals of grazing, until one prevailed. The next day they bore the marks of some bruises, some places where the skin was rucked up, and some swellings.

And then for my afternoon walks I have a garden, larger than any artificial garden that I have read of and far more attractive to me, — mile after mile of embowered walks, such as no nobleman's grounds can boast, with animals running free and wild therein as from the first, — varied with land and water prospect, and, above all, so retired that it is extremely rare that I meet a single wanderer in its mazes. No gardener is seen therein, no gates nor [*sic*]. You may wander away to solitary bowers and brooks and hills.

The ripple marks on the sandy bottom of Flint's Pond, where the rushes grow, feel hard to the feet of

the wader, though the sand is really soft, — made firm perchance by the weight of the water.[1]

The rushes over the water are white with the exuviæ, the skeletons, of insects, — like blossoms, — which have deposited their eggs on their tops. The skeletons looked like those of shad-flies, though some living insects were not.

I have seen crimson-colored eggs painting the leaves of the black birch quite beautifully.

And now the ascending sun has contracted the shadow of the solitary tree, and they are compelled to seek the neighboring wood for shelter.

June 21. The flowers of the white pine are now in their prime, but I see none of their pollen on the pond.

This piece of rural pantomime, this bucolic, is enacted before me every day. Far over the hills on that fair hillside, I look into the pastoral age.

But these are only the disadvantages of a fire. It is without doubt an advantage on the whole. It sweeps and ventilates the forest floor, and makes it clear and clean. It is nature's besom. By destroying the punier underwood it gives prominence to the larger and sturdier trees, and makes a wood in which you can go and come. I have often remarked with how much more comfort and pleasure I could walk in woods through which a fire had run the previous year. It will clean the forest floor like a broom perfectly smooth and clear, — no twigs

[1] [*Walden*, p. 216; Riv. 305.]

left to crackle underfoot, the dead and rotten wood removed, — and thus in the course of two or three years new huckleberry fields are created for the town, — for birds and men.

When the lightning burns the forest its Director makes no apology to man, and I was but His agent. Perhaps we owe to this accident partly some of the noblest natural parks. It is inspiriting to walk amid the fresh green sprouts of grass and shrubbery pushing upward through the charred surface with more vigorous growth.

Wherever a man goes men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions.[1]

Sometimes an arrowhead is found with the mouldering shaft still attached. (*Vide* Charles Hubbard.) A little boy from Compton, R. I., told me that his father found an arrowhead sticking in a dead tree and nearly buried in it. Where is the hand that drew that bow? The arrow shot by the Indian is still found occasionally, sticking in the trees of our forest.

It is astonishing how much information is to be got out of very unpromising witnesses. A wise man will avail himself of the observation of all. Every boy and simpleton has been an observer in some field, — so many more senses they are, differently located. Will inquire of eyes what they have seen, of ears what they have heard, of hands what they have done, of feet where they have been.

July 16. I have not yet been able to collect half a

[1] [*Walden*, p. 190; Riv. 268.]

thimbleful of the pollen of the pine on Walden, abundant as it was last summer.

There is in our yard a little pitch pine four or five years old and not much more than a foot high, with small cones on it but no male flowers; and yet I do not know of another pitch pine tree within half a mile.

Many men walk by day; few walk by night. It is a very different season. Instead of the sun, there are the moon and stars; instead of the wood thrush, there is the whip-poor-will; instead of butterflies, fireflies, winged sparks of fire! who would have believed it? What kind of life and cool deliberation dwells in a spark of fire in dewy abodes? Every man carries fire in his eye, or in his blood, or in his brain. Instead of singing birds, the croaking of frogs and the intenser dream of crickets. The potatoes stand up straight, the corn grows, the bushes loom, and, in a moonlight night, the shadows of rocks and trees and bushes and hills are more conspicuous than the objects themselves. The slightest inequalities in the ground are revealed by the shadows; what the feet find comparatively smooth appears rough and diversified to the eye. The smallest recesses in the rocks are dim and cavernous; the ferns in the wood appear to be of tropical size; the pools seen through the leaves become as full of light as the sky. "The light of day takes refuge in their bosom," as the Purana says of the ocean. The woods are heavy and dark. Nature slumbers. The rocks retain the warmth of the sun which they have absorbed all night.[1]

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 326–328; Riv. 401–403.]

The names of those who bought these fields of the red men, the wild men of the woods, are Buttrick, Davis, Barrett, Bulkley, etc., etc. (*Vide* History.) Here and there still you will find a man with Indian blood in his veins, an eccentric farmer descended from an Indian chief; or you will see a solitary pure-blooded Indian, looking as wild as ever among the pines, one of the last of the Massachusetts tribes, stepping into a railroad car with his gun.

Still here and there an Indian squaw with her dog, her only companion, lives in some lone house, insulted by school-children, making baskets and picking berries her employment. You will meet her on the highway, with few children or none, with melancholy face, history, destiny; stepping after her race; who had stayed to tuck them up in their long sleep. For whom berries condescend to grow. I have not seen one on the Musketaquid for many a year, and some who came up in their canoes and camped on its banks a dozen years ago had to ask me where it came from. A lone Indian woman without children, accompanied by her dog, wearing the shroud of her race, performing the last offices for her departed race. Not yet absorbed into the elements again; a daughter of the soil; one of the nobility of the land. The white man an imported weed, — burdock and mullein, which displace the ground-nut.

As a proof that oysters do not move, I have been told by a Long Island oysterman that they are found in large clusters surrounding the parent oyster in the position in which they must have grown, the young being several years old.

I find the actual to be far less real to me than the imagined. Why this singular prominence and importance is given to the former, I do not know. In proportion as that which possesses my thoughts is removed from the actual, it impresses me. I have never met with anything so truly visionary and accidental as some actual events. They have affected me less than my dreams. Whatever actually happens to a man is wonderfully trivial and insignificant, — even to death itself, I imagine. He complains of the fates who drown him, that they do not touch *him*. They do not deal directly with him. I have in my pocket a button which I ripped off the coat of the Marquis of Ossoli [1] on the seashore the other day. Held up, it intercepts the light and casts a shadow, — an *actual* button so called, — and yet all the life it is connected with is less substantial to me than my faintest dreams. This stream of events which we consent to call actual, and that other mightier stream which alone carries us with it, — what makes the difference? On the one our bodies float, and we have sympathy with it through them; on the other, our spirits. We are ever dying to one world and being born into another, and possibly no man knows whether he is at any time dead in the sense in which he affirms that phenomenon of another, or not. Our thoughts are the epochs of our life: all else is but as a journal of the winds that blew while we were here.[2]

[1] [In July, 1850, Thoreau went to Fire Island with other friends of Margaret Fuller to search for her remains. See *Cape Cod*, pp. 107, 108; Riv. 126, 127. See also next page.]

[2] [Part of draft of a letter to H. G. O. Blake, dated Aug. 9, 1850. Other parts follow. *Familiar Letters*.]

I do not think much of the actual. It is something which we have long since done with. It is a sort of vomit in which the unclean love to wallow.

There was nothing at all remarkable about them. They were simply some bones lying on the beach. They would not detain a walker there more than so much sea-weed. I should think that the fates would not take the trouble to show me any bones again, I so slightly appreciate the favor.[1]

Do a little more of that work which you have sometime confessed to be good, which you feel that society and your justest judge rightly demands of you. Do what you reprove yourself for not doing. Know that you are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with yourself without reason. Let me say to you and to myself in one breath, Cultivate the tree which you have found to bear fruit in your soil. Regard not your past failures nor successes. All the past is equally a failure and a success; it is a success in as much as it offers you the present opportunity. Have you not a pretty good thinking faculty, worth more than the rarest gold watch? Can you not pass a judgment on something? Does not the stream still rise to its fountain-head in you? Go to the devil and come back again. Dispose of evil. Get punished once for all. Die, if you can. Depart. Exchange your salvation for a glass of water. If you know of any risk to run, run it. If you don't know of any, enjoy confidence. Do not trouble yourself to be religious; you will never get a thank-you for it. If you can drive a nail and have any nails to drive, drive them. If you have any experiments

[1] [See *Cape Cod*, p. 108; Riv. 127. See also p. 80 of this volume.]

you would like to try, try them; now's your chance. Do not entertain doubts, if they are not agreeable to you. Send them to the tavern. Do not eat unless you are hungry; there's no need of it. Do not read the newspapers. Improve every opportunity to be melancholy. Be as melancholy as you can be, and note the result. Rejoice with fate. As for health, consider yourself well, and mind your business. Who knows but you are dead already? Do not stop to be scared yet; there are more terrible things to come, and ever to come. Men die of fright and live of confidence. Be not simply obedient like the vegetables; set up your own Ebenezer. Of man's "*dis*obedience and the fruit," etc. Do not engage to find things as you think they are. Do what nobody can do for you. Omit to do everything else.[1]

According to Lieutenant Davis, the forms, extent, and distribution of sand-bars and banks are principally determined by tides, not by winds and waves.[2] On sand-bars recently elevated above the level of the ocean, fresh water is obtained by digging a foot or two. It is very common for wells near the shore to rise and fall with the tide. It is an interesting fact that the low sand-bars in the midst of the ocean, even those which are laid bare only at low tide, are reservoirs of fresh water at which the thirsty mariner can supply himself. Perchance, like huge sponges, they hold the rain and dew which falls on them, and which, by capillary attraction, is prevented from mingling with the surrounding brine.[3]

[1] [*Familiar Letters*, Aug. 9, 1850.] [2] [*Cape Cod*, p. 155; Riv. 185.]
[3] [*Cape Cod*, p. 225; Riv. 271.]

It is not easy to make our lives respectable to ourselves by any course of activity. We have repeatedly to withdraw ourselves into our shells of thought like the tortoise, somewhat helplessly; and yet there is even more than philosophy in that. I do not love to entertain doubts and questions.

I am sure that my acquaintances mistake me. I am not the man they take me for. On a little nearer view they would find me out. They ask my advice on high matters, but they do not even know how poorly on't I am for hats and shoes. I have hardly a shift. Just as shabby as I am in my outward apparel, — aye, and more lamentably shabby, for nakedness is not so bad a condition after all, — am I in my inward apparel. If I should turn myself inside out, my rags and meanness would appear. I am something to him that made me, undoubtedly, but not much to any other that he has made.[1] All I can say is that I live and breathe and have my thoughts.

What is peculiar in the life of a man consists not in his obedience, but his opposition, to his instincts. In one direction or another he strives to live a supernatural life.

Would it not be worth the while to discover nature in Milton?[2] Be native to the universe. I, too, love Concord best, but I am glad when I discover, in oceans and wildernesses far away, the materials out of which a million Concords can be made, — indeed, unless I discover them, I am lost myself, — that there too I am at

[1] [*Familiar Letters*, Aug. 9, 1850.]

[2] [Blake was at the time living in Milton, Mass.]

home. Nature is as far from me as God, and sometimes I have thought to go West after her. Though the city is no more attractive to me than ever, yet I see less difference between a city and some dismallest swamp than formerly. It is a swamp too dismal and dreary, however, for me. I would as lief find a few owls and frogs and mosquitoes less. I prefer even a more cultivated place, free from miasma and crocodiles, and I will take my choice.[1]

From time to time I overlook the promised land, but I do not feel that I am travelling toward it. The moment I begin to look there, men and institutions get out of the way that I may see. I see nothing permanent in the society around me, and am not quite committed to any of its ways.

The heaven-born Numa, or Lycurgus, or Solon, gravely makes laws to regulate the exportation of tobacco. Will a divine legislator legislate for slaves, or to regulate the exportation of tobacco? What shall a State say for itself at the last day, in which this is a principal production?

What have grave, not to say divine, legislators — Numas, Lycurguses, Solons — to do with the exportation or the importation of tobacco. There was a man appealed to me the other day, "Can you give me a chaw of tobacco?" I *legislated* for him. Suppose you were to submit the question to any *son of God*, in what State would you get it again?[2]

[1] [*Familiar Letters*, Aug. 9, 1850.]

[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 478; *Misc.*, Riv. 282, 283.]

Do not waste any reverence on my attitude. I manage to sit up where I have dropped. Except as you reverence the evil one, — or rather the evil *myriad*. As for missing friends, — fortunate perhaps is he who has any to miss, whose place a thought will not supply. I have an ideal friend in whose place actual persons sometimes stand for a season. The last I may often miss, but the first I recover when I am myself again. What if we do miss one another? have we not agreed upon a rendezvous? While each travels his own way through the wood with serene and inexpressible joy, though it be on his hands and knees over the rocks and fallen trees, he cannot but be on the right way; there is no wrong way to him. I have found myself as well off when I have fallen into a quagmire, as in an armchair in the most hospitable house. The prospect was pretty much the same. Without anxiety let us wander on, admiring whatever beauty the woods exhibit.[1]

Do you know on what bushes a little peace, faith, and contentment grow? Go a-berrying early and late after them.[2] Miss our friends! It is not easy to get rid of them. We shall miss our bodies directly.

As to conforming outwardly, and living your own life inwardly, I have not a very high opinion of that course. Do not let your right hand know what your left hand does in that line of business. I have no doubt it will prove a failure.[3]

[1] [*Familiar Letters*, Aug. 9, 1850.]
[2] [Channing, p. 78.]
[3] [*Familiar Letters*, Aug. 9, 1850.]

The wind through the blind just now sounded like the baying of a distant hound, — somewhat plaintive and melodious.

The railroad cuts make cliffs for swallows.

Getting into Patchogue late one night in an oyster-boat, there was a drunken Dutchman aboard whose wit reminded me of Shakespeare. When we came to leave the beach, our boat was aground, and we were detained three hours waiting for the tide. In the meanwhile two of the fishermen took an extra dram at the beach house. Then they stretched themselves on the seaweed by the shore in the sun to sleep off the effects of their debauch. One was an inconceivably broad-faced young Dutchman, — but oh! of such a peculiar breadth and heavy look, I should not know whether to call it more ridiculous or sublime. You would say that he had humbled himself so much that he was beginning to be exalted. An indescribable mynheerish stupidity. I was less disgusted by their filthiness and vulgarity, because I was compelled to look on them as animals, as swine in their sty. For the whole voyage they lay flat on their backs on the bottom of the boat, in the bilge-water and wet with each bailing, half insensible and wallowing in their vomit. But ever and anon, when aroused by the rude kicks or curses of the skipper, the Dutchman, who never lost his wit nor equanimity, though snoring and rolling in the vomit produced by his debauch, blurted forth some happy repartee like an illuminated swine. It was the earthiest, slimiest wit I ever heard. The countenance was one of

a million. It was unmistakable Dutch. In the midst of a million faces of other races it could not be mistaken. It told of Amsterdam. I kept racking my brains to conceive how he could have been born in America, how lonely he must feel, what he did for fellowship. When we were groping up the narrow creek of Patchogue at ten o'clock at night, keeping our boat off, now from this bank, now from that, with a pole, the two inebriates roused themselves betimes. For in spite of their low estate they seemed to have all their wits as much about them as ever, aye, and all the self-respect they ever had. And the Dutchman gave wise directions to the steerer, which were not heeded. Suddenly rousing himself up where the sharpest-eyed might be bewildered in the darkness, he leaned over the side of the boat and pointed straight down into the creek, averring that that identical hole was a first-rate place for eels. And again he roused himself at the right time and declared what luck he had once had with his pots (not his cups) in another place, which we were floating over in the dark. At last he suddenly stepped on to another boat which was moored to the shore, with a divine ease and sureness, saying, "Well, good-night, take care of yourselves, I can't be with you any longer." He was one of the few remarkable men whom I have met. I have been impressed by one or two men in their cups. There was really a divinity stirred within them, so that in their case I have reverenced the drunken, as savages the insane, man. So stupid that he could never be intoxicated. When I said, "You have had a hard time of it to-day," he answered with indescribable good humor out of the

very midst of his debauch, with watery eyes, "Well, it does n't happen every day." It was happening then.[1] He had taken me aboard on his back, the boat lying a rod from the shore, before I knew his condition. In the darkness our skipper steered with a pole on the bottom, for an oysterman knows the bottom of his bay as well as the shores, and can tell where he is by the soundings.[2]

There was a glorious lurid sunset to-night, accompanied with many sombre clouds, and when I looked into the west with my head turned, the grass had the same fresh green, and the distant herbage and foliage in the horizon the same bark blue, and the clouds and sky the same bright colors beautifully mingled and dissolving into one another, that I have seen in pictures of tropical landscapes and skies. Pale saffron skies with faint fishes of rosy clouds dissolving in them. A blood-stained sky. I regretted that I had an impatient companion. What shall we make of the fact that you have only to stand on your head a moment to be enchanted with the beauty of the landscape?

I met with a man on the beach who told me that when he wanted to jump over a brook he held up one leg a certain height, and then, if a line from his eye through his toe touched the opposite bank, he knew that he could jump it. I asked him how he knew when he held his leg at the right angle, and he said he knew the hitch very well. An Irishman told me that he held up one leg and if he could bring his toe in a range with his eye and the opposite bank he knew that he could

[1] [Channing, pp. 36, 37.] [2] [See pp. 78, 79.]

jump it. Why, I told him, I can blot out a star with my toe, but I would not engage to jump the distance. It then appeared that he knew when he had got his leg at the right height by a certain hitch there was in it. I suggested that he should connect his two ankles with a string.[1]

I knew a clergyman who, when any person died, was wont to speak of that portion of mankind who survived as living monuments of God's mercy. A negative kind of life to live!

I can easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do. Concord is the oldest inland town in New England, perhaps in the States, and the walker is peculiarly favored here. There are square miles in my vicinity which have no inhabitant. First along by the river, and then the brook, and then the meadow and the woodside. Such solitude! From a hundred hills I can see civilization and abodes of man afar. These farmers and their works are scarcely more obvious than woodchucks.[2]

As I was going by with a creaking wheelbarrow, one of my neighbors, who heard the music, ran out with his grease-pot and brush and greased the wheels.

[1] [An example of Thoreau's practice work, — the same story told in two forms. For its final form see *Cape Cod*, p. 88; Riv. 103, 104.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 212; Riv. 260.]

That is a peculiar season when about the middle of August the farmers are getting their meadow-hay. If you sail up the river, you will see them in all meadows, raking hay and loading it on to carts, great towering [?] teams, under which the oxen stand like beetles, chewing the cud, waiting for men to put the meadow on. With the heaviest load they dash aside to crop some more savory grass, — the half-broken steers.

There was reason enough for the first settler's selecting the elm out of all the trees of the forest with which to ornament his villages. It is beautiful alike by sunlight and moonlight, and the most beautiful specimens are not the largest. I have seen some only twenty-five or thirty years old, more graceful and healthy, I think, than any others. It is almost become a villageous tree, — like martins and bluebirds.

The high blueberry has the wildest flavor of any of the huckleberry tribe. It is a little mithridatic. It is like eating a poisonous berry which your nature makes harmless. I derive the same pleasure as if I were eating dog-berries, nightshade, and wild parsnip with impunity.

Man and his affairs, — Church and State and school, trade and commerce and agriculture, — Politics, — for that is the word for them all here to-day, — I am pleased to see how little space it occupies in the landscape. It is but a narrow field. That still narrower highway yonder leads to it. I sometimes direct the traveller [1] [Two pages missing.]

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 212, 213; Riv. 260, 261.]

And once again,
When I went a-maying,
And once or twice more
I had seen thee before,
For there grow the mayflower
(*Epigæa repens*)
And the mountain cranberry
And the screech owl *strepens*.

O whither dost thou go?
Which way dost thou flow?
Thou art the way.
Thou art a road
Which Dante never trode.
Not many they be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.[1]

There was a cross-eyed fellow used to help me survey, — he was my stake-driver, — and all he said was, at every stake he drove, "There, I should n't like to undertake to pull *that* up with my teeth."

It sticks in my *crop*. That's a good phrase. Many things stick there.

The man of wild habits,
Partridges and rabbits,
Who has no cares
Only to set snares,

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 215; Riv. 263.]

Who liv'st all alone,
Close to the bone,
And where life is sweetest
Constantly eatest.

Where they once dug for money,
But never found "ony."

To market fares
With early apples and pears.
When the spring stirs my blood
  With the instinct to travel,
  I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road.

If you'll leave your abode
  With your fancy unfurled,
  You may go round the world
By the Old Marlborough Road.

Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it.
It is a living way,
As the Christians say.
What is it, what is it,
  But a direction out there
And the bare possibility
  Of going somewhere?
Great guide-*boards* of stone,
But travellers none.
It is worth going there to see
Where you might be.

They 're a great endeavor
To be something for ever.
They are a monument to somebody,
To some selectman
Who thought of the plan.
What king
Did the thing,
I am still wondering.
Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns;
Huge as Stonehenge;
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen?
Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby?
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveller might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that is known;
Which another might read,
In his extreme need.
I know two or three
Sentences, *i. e.*,
That might there be.
Literature that might stand
All over the land.
Which a man might remember
Till after December,
And read again in the spring,
After the thawing.[1]

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 214–216; Riv. 263, 264.]

Old meeting-house bell,
I love thy music well.
It peals through the air,
Sweetly full and fair,
As in the early times,
When I listened to its chimes.

I walk over the hills, to compare *great* things with *small*, as through a gallery of pictures, ever and anon looking through a gap in the wood, as through the frame of a picture, to a more distant wood or hillside, painted with several more coats of air. It is a cheap but pleasant effect. To a landscape in picture, glassed with air.

What is a horizon without mountains?

A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air. It has new life and motion. It is intermediate between land and sky. On land, only the grass and trees wave, but the water itself is *rippled* by the wind. I see the breeze dash across it in streaks and flakes of light. It is somewhat singular that we should *look down* on the surface of water. We shall look down on the surface of air next, and mark where a still subtler spirit sweeps over *it*.[1]

Without inlet it lies,
Without outlet it flows.
From and to the skies
It comes and it goes.
I am its source,
And my life is its course.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 209, 210; Riv. 296.]

I am its stony shore
And the breeze that passes o'er.[1]

[Two thirds of a page missing.]

All that the money-digger had ever found was a pine-tree shilling, once as he was dunging out. He was paid much more for dunging out, but he valued more the money which he found. The boy thinks most of the cent he found, not the cent he earned; for it suggests to him that he may find a great deal more, but he knows that he can't earn *much*, and perhaps did not deserve that.

[Two pages missing.]

Among the worst of men that ever lived.
However, we did seriously attend,
A little space we let our thoughts ascend,
Experienced our religion and confessed
'T was good for us to be there, — be anywhere.
Then to a heap of apples we addressed,
And cleared a five-rail fence with hand on the topmost
rider *sine* care.
Then our Icarian thoughts returned to ground,
And we went on to heaven the long way round.

What's the railroad to me?
I never go to see
Where it ends.
It fills a few hollows,
And makes banks for the swallows;

[1] [*Walden*, p. 215; Riv. 303.]

It sets the sand a-flowing,
And blackberries a-growing.[1]

Aug. 31. TALL AMBROSIA

Among the signs of autumn I perceive
The Roman wormwood (called by learned men
Ambrosia elatior, food for gods,
For by impartial science the humblest weed
Is as well named as is the proudest flower)
Sprinkles its yellow dust over my shoes
As I brush through the now neglected garden.
We trample under foot the food of gods
And spill their nectar in each drop of dew.
My honest shoes, fast friends that never stray
Far from my couch, thus powdered, countrified,
Bearing many a mile the marks of their adventure,
At the post-house disgrace the Gallic gloss
Of those well-dressed ones who no morning dew
Nor Roman wormwood ever have gone through,
Who never walk, but are *transported* rather,
For what old crime of theirs I do not gather.

The gray blueberry bushes, venerable as oaks, — why is not their fruit poisonous? Bilberry called *Vaccinium corymbosum;* some say *amœnum*, or blue bilberry, and *Vaccinium disomorphum* Mx., black bilberry. Its fruit hangs on into September, but loses its wild and sprightly taste.

Th' ambrosia of the Gods 's a weed on earth,
Their nectar is the morning dew which on-
Ly our shoes taste, for they are simple folks.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 135, 136; Riv. 192.]

'T is very fit the ambrosia of the gods
Should be a weed on earth, as nectar is
The morning dew which our shoes brush aside;
For the gods are simple folks, and we should pine upon
their humble fare.

The purple flowers of the humble trichostema mingled with the wormwood, smelling like it; and the spring-scented, dandelion-scented primrose, yellow primrose. The swamp-pink (*Azalea viscosa*), its now withered pistils standing out.

The odoriferous sassafras, with its delicate green stem, its three-lobed leaf, tempting the traveller to bruise it, it sheds so rare a perfume on him, equal to all the spices of the East. Then its rare-tasting root bark, like nothing else, which I used to dig. The first navigators freighted their ships with it and deemed it worth its weight in gold.

The alder-leaved clethra (*Clethra alnifolia*), sweet-smelling queen of the swamp; its long white racemes.

We are most apt to remember and cherish the flowers which appear earliest in the spring. I look with equal affection on those which are the latest to bloom in the fall.

The choke-berry (*Pyrus arbutifolia*).

The beautiful white waxen berries of the cornel, either *Cornus alba* or *paniculata*, white-berried or panicled, beautiful both when full of fruit and when its cymes are naked; delicate red cymes or stems of berries; spreading its little fairy fingers to the skies, its little palms; fairy palms they might be called.

One of the viburnums, *Lentago* or *pyrifolium* or

nudum, with its poisonous-looking fruit in cymes, first greenish-white, then red, then purple, or all at once.

The imp-eyed, red, velvety-looking berry of the swamps.[1]

The spotted polygonum (*Polygonum Persicaria*), seen in low lands amid the potatoes now, wild prince's-feather (?), slight flower that does not forget to grace the autumn.

The late whortleberry — dangleberry — that ripens now that other huckleberries and blueberries are shrivelled and spoiling, September 1st; dangle down two or three inches; can rarely find many. They have a more transparent look, large, blue, long-stemmed, dangling, fruit of the swamp concealed.

I detect the pennyroyal which my feet have bruised.

Butter-and-eggs still hold out to bloom.

I notice that cows never walk abreast, but in single file commonly, making a narrow cow-path, or the herd walks in an irregular and loose wedge. They retain still the habit of all the deer tribe, acquired when the earth was all covered with forest, of travelling from necessity in narrow paths in the woods.

At sundown a herd of cows, returning homeward from pasture over a sandy knoll, pause to paw the sand and challenge the representatives of another herd, raising a cloud of dust between the beholder and the setting sun. And then the herd boys rush to mingle in the fray and separate the combatants, two cows with horns interlocked, the one pushing the other down the bank.

[1] Wild holly?

My grandmother called her cow home at night from the pasture over the hill, by thumping on a mortar out of which the cow was accustomed to eat salt.

At Nagog I saw a hundred bushels of huckleberries in one field.

The Roman wormwood, pigweed, a stout, coarse red-topped (?) weed (*Amaranthus hybridus*), and spotted polygonum; these are the lusty growing plants now, September 2d.

Tall, slender, minute white-flowered weed in gardens, annual fleabane (*Erigeron Canadensis*).

One of my neighbors, of whom I borrowed a horse, cart, and harness to-day, which last was in a singularly dilapidated condition, considering that he is a wealthy farmer, did not know but I would make a book about it.

As I was stalking over the surface of this planet in the dark to-night, I started a plover resting on the ground and heard him go off with whistling wings.

My friends wonder that I love to walk alone in solitary fields and woods by night. Sometimes in my loneliest and wildest midnight walk I hear the sound of the whistle and the rattle of the cars, where perchance some of those very friends are being whirled by night over, as they think, a well-known, safe, and public road. I see that men do not make or choose their own paths, whether they are railroads or trackless through the wilds, but what the powers permit each one enjoys. My solitary

course has the same sanction that the Fitchburg Railroad has. If they have a charter from Massachusetts and — what is of much more importance — from Heaven, to travel the course and in the fashion they do, I have a charter, though it be from Heaven alone, to travel the course I do, — to take the necessary lands and pay the damages. It is by the grace of God in both cases.

Now, about the first of September, you will see flocks of small birds forming compact and distinct masses, as if they were not only animated by one spirit but actually held together by some invisible fluid or film, and will hear the sound of their wings rippling or fanning the air as they flow through it, flying, the whole mass, ricochet like a single bird, — or as they flow over the fence. Their mind must operate faster than man's, in proportion as their bodies do.

What a generation this is! It travels with some brains in its hat, with a couple of spare cigars on top of them. It carries a heart in its breast, covered by a lozenge in its waistcoat pocket.

John Garfield brought me this morning (September 6th) a young great heron (*Ardea Herodias*), which he shot this morning on a pine tree on the North Branch. It measured four feet, nine inches, from bill to toe and six feet in alar extent, and belongs to a different race from myself and Mr. Frost. I am glad to recognize him for a native of America, — why not an American citizen?

In the twilight, when you can only see the outlines of the trees in the horizon, the elm-tops indicate where the houses are. I have looked afar over fields and even over distant woods and distinguished the conspicuous graceful, sheaf-like head of an elm which shadowed some farmhouse. From the northwest (?) part of Sudbury you can see an elm on the Boston road, on the hilltop in the horizon in Wayland, five or six miles distant. The elm is a tree which can be distinguished farther off perhaps than any other. The wheelwright still makes his hubs of it, his spokes of white oak, his fellies of yellow oak, which does not crack on the corners. In England, 't is said, they use the ash for fellies.

There is a little grove in a swampy place in Conantum where some rare things grow, — several bass trees, two kinds of ash, sassafras, maidenhair fern, the white-berried plant (ivory?), etc., etc., and the sweet viburnum (?) in the hedge near by.

This will be called the wet year of 1850. The river is as high now, September 9th, as in the spring, and hence the prospects and the reflections seen from the village are something novel.

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Roman wormwood, pigweed, amaranth, polygonum, and one or two coarse kinds of grass reign now in the cultivated fields.

Though the potatoes have man with all his implements on their side, these rowdy and rampant weeds completely bury them, between the last hoeing and the digging. The potatoes hardly succeed with the utmost care: these weeds only ask to be *let alone* a little

while. I judge that they have not got the rot. I sympathize with all this luxuriant growth of weeds. Such is the year. The weeds grow as if in sport and frolic.

You might say green as green-briar.

I do not know whether the practice of putting indigo-weed about horses' tackling to keep off flies is well founded, but I hope it is, for I have been pleased to notice that wherever I have occasion to tie a horse I am sure to find indigo-weed not far off, and therefore this, which is so universally dispersed, would be the fittest weed for this purpose.

The thistle is now in bloom, which every child is eager to clutch once, — just a child's handful.

The prunella, self-heal, small purplish-flowered plant of low grounds.

Charles [1] grew up to be a remarkably eccentric man. He was of large frame, athletic, and celebrated for his feats of strength. His lungs were proportionally strong. There was a man who heard him named once, and asked if it was the same Charles Dunbar whom he remembered when he was a little boy walking on the coast of Maine. A man came down to the shore and hailed a vessel that was sailing by. He should never forget that man's name.

It was well grassed, and delicate flowers grew in the middle of the road.

[1] [Charles Dunbar was Thoreau's uncle. See Sanborn, pp. 21–23, 92, 93; also *Journal*, vol. iv, Jan. 1, 1853, and vol. viii, Apr. 3, 1856.]

I saw a delicate flower had grown up two feet high
Between the horses' path and the wheel-track,
Which Dakin's and Maynard's wagons had
Passed over many a time.
An inch more to right or left had sealed its fate,
Or an inch higher. And yet it lived and flourished
As much as if it had a thousand acres
Of untrodden space around it, and never
Knew the danger it incurred.
It did not borrow trouble nor invite an
Evil fate by apprehending it.[1]
For though the distant market-wagon
Every other day inevitably rolled
This way, it just as inevitably rolled
In those ruts. And the same
Charioteer who steered the flower
Upward guided the horse and cart aside from it.
There were other flowers which you would say
Incurred less danger, grew more out of the way,
Which no cart rattled near, no walker daily passed,
But at length one rambling deviously —
For no rut restrained — plucked them,
And then it appeared that they stood
Directly in his way, though he had come
From farther than the market-wagon.

And then it appeared that this brave flower which grew between the wheel and horse did actually stand farther out of the way than that which stood in the wide prairie where the man of science plucked it.

[1] [Channing, p. 293 (as prose).]

To-day I climbed a handsome rounded hill
Covered with hickory trees, wishing to see
The country from its top, for low hills
Show unexpected prospects. I looked
Many miles over a woody lowland
Toward Marlborough, Framingham, and Sudbury;
And as I sat amid the hickory trees

And the young sumachs, enjoying the prospect, a neat herd of cows approached, of unusually fair proportions and smooth, clean skins, evidently petted by their owner, who must have carefully selected them. One more confiding heifer, the fairest of the herd, did by degrees approach as if to take some morsel from our hands, while our hearts leaped to our mouths with expectation and delight. She by degrees drew near with her fair limbs progressive, making pretense of browsing; nearer and nearer, till there was wafted toward us the bovine fragrance, — cream of all the dairies that ever were or will be, — and then she raised her gentle muzzle toward us, and snuffed an honest recognition within hand's reach. I saw 't was possible for his herd to inspire with love the herdsman. She was as delicately featured as a hind. Her hide was mingled white and fawn-color, and on her muzzle's tip there was a white spot not bigger than a daisy, and on her side toward me the map of Asia plain to see.

Farewell, dear heifer! Though thou forgettest me, my prayer to heaven shall be that thou may'st not forget thyself. There was a whole bucolic in her snuff. I saw her name was Sumach. And by the kindred spots I knew her mother, more sedate and matronly,

with full-grown bag; and on her sides was Asia, great and small, the plains of Tartary, even to the pole, while on her daughter it was Asia Minor. She not disposed to wanton with the herdsman.

And as I walked, she followed me, and took an apple from my hand, and seemed to care more for the hand than apple. So innocent a face as I have rarely seen on any creature, and I have looked in face of many heifers. And as she took the apple from my hand, I caught the apple of her eye. She smelled as sweet as the clethra blossom. There was no sinister expression. And for horns, though she had them, they were so well disposed in the right place, bent neither up nor down, I do not now remember she had any. No horn was held toward me.[1]

Sept. 11. *Wednesday.* The river higher than I ever knew it at this season, as high as in the spring.

Yesterday, September 14, walked to White Pond in Stow, on the Marlborough road, having passed one pond called sometimes Pratt's Pond, sometimes Bottomless Pond, in Sudbury. Saw afterward another pond beyond Willis's also called Bottomless Pond, in a thick swamp. To name two ponds bottomless when both of them have a bottom! Verily men choose darkness rather than light.[2]

The farmers are now cutting — topping — their corn, gathering their early fruit, raking their cranberries, digging their potatoes, etc.

[1] [Channing, pp. 76, 77; Sanborn, pp. 258, 259.]

[2] [See *Walden*, p. 315; Riv. 441.]

Everything has its use, and man seeks sedulously for the best article for each use. The watchmaker finds the oil of the porpoise's jaw the best for oiling his watches. Man has a million eyes, and the race knows infinitely more than the individual. Consent to be wise through your race.

Autumnal mornings, when the feet of countless sparrows are heard like rain-drops on the roof by the boy who sleeps in the garret.

Villages with a single long street lined with trees, so straight and wide that you can see a chicken run across it a mile off.

Sept. 19. The gerardia, yellow trumpet-like flower. Veiny-leaved hawkweed (leaves handsome, radical excepting one or two; know them well) (*Hieracium venosum*), flower like a dandelion. Canada snapdragon, small pea-like blue flower in the wood-paths, (*Antirrhinum Canadense*). Pine-weed, thickly branched low weed with red seed-vessels, in wood-paths and fields, (*Sarothra gentianoides*). Cucumber-root (*Medeola*). Tree-primrose. Red-stemmed cornel. The very minute flower which grows now in the middle of the Marlborough road.

I am glad to have drunk water so long, as I prefer the natural sky to an opium-eater's heaven, — would keep sober always, and lead a sane life not indebted to stimulants. Whatever my practice may be, I believe that it

is the only drink for a wise man, and only the foolish habitually use any other. Think of dashing the hopes of a morning with a cup of coffee, or of an evening with a dish of tea! Wine is not a noble liquor, except when it is confined to the pores of the grape. Even music is wont to be intoxicating. Such apparently slight causes destroyed Greece and Rome, and will destroy England and America.[1]

I have seen where the rain dripped from the trees on a sand-bank on the Marlborough road, that each little pebble which had protected the sand made the summit of a sort of basaltic column of sand, — a phenomenon which looked as if it might be repeated on a larger scale in nature.

The goldenrods and asters impress me not like individuals but great families covering a thousand hills and having a season to themselves.

The indigo-weed turns black when dry, and I have been interested to find in each of its humble seed-vessels a worm.

The Deep Cut is sometimes excited to productiveness by a rain in midsummer. It impresses me somewhat as if it were a cave, with all its stalactites turned wrong side outward. Workers in bronze should come here for their patterns.

Those were carrots which I saw naturalized in Wheeler's field. It was four or five years since he planted there.

To-day I saw a sunflower in the woods.

It is pleasant to see the *Viola pedata* blossoming again

[1] [*Walden*, p. 240; Riv. 338.]

now, in September, with a beauty somewhat serener than that of these yellow flowers.

The trees on the bank of the river have white furrows worn about them, marking the height of the freshets, at what levels the water has stood.

Water is so much more fine and sensitive an element than earth. A single boatman passing up or down unavoidably shakes the whole of a wide river, and disturbs its every reflection. The air is an element which our voices shake still further than our oars the water.

The red maples on the river, standing far in the water when the banks are overflown and touched by the earliest frosts, are memorable features in the scenery of the stream at this season.

Now you can scent the ripe grapes far off on the banks as you row along. Their fragrance is finer than their flavor.

My companion said he would drink when the boat got under the bridge, because the water would be cooler in the shade, though the stream quickly passes through the piers from shade to sun again. It is something beautiful, the act of drinking, the stooping to imbibe some of this widespread element, in obedience to instinct, without whim. We do not so simply drink in other influences.

It is pleasant to have been to a place by the way a river went.

The forms of trees and groves change with every stroke of the oar.

It seems hardly worth the while to risk the dangers of the sea between Leghorn and New York for the sake of a cargo of juniper berries and bitter almonds.

Oh, if I could be intoxicated on air and water![1] on hope and memory! and always see the maples standing red in the midst of the waters on the meadow!

Those have met with losses, who have lost their children. I saw the widow this morning whose son was drowned.

That I might never be blind to the beauty of the landscape! To hear music without any vibrating cord!

A family in which there was singing in the morning. To hear a neighbor singing! All other speech sounds thereafter like profanity. A man cannot sing falsehood or cowardice; he must sing truth and heroism to attune his voice to some instrument. It would be noblest to sing with the wind. I have seen a man making himself a viol, patiently and fondly paring the thin wood and shaping it, and when I considered the end of the work he was ennobled in my eyes. He was building himself a ship in which to sail to new worlds. I am much indebted to my neighbor who will now and then in the intervals of his work draw forth a few strains from his accordion. Though he is but a learner, I find when his strains cease that I have been elevated.

The question is not whether you drink, but what liquor.

Plucked a wild rose the 9th of October on Fair Haven Hill.

Butter-and-eggs, which blossomed several months ago, still freshly [in] bloom (October 11th).

He knew what shrubs were best for withes.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 240; Riv. 338.]

This is a remarkable year. Huckleberries are still quite abundant and fresh on Conantum. There have been more berries than pickers or even worms. (October 9th.)

I am always exhilarated, as were the early voyagers, by the sight of sassafras (*Laurus Sassafras*). The green leaves bruised have the fragrance of lemons and a thousand spices. To the same order belong cinnamon, cassia, camphor.

Hickory is said to be an Indian name. (Nuttall's continuation of Michaux.)

The seed vessel of the sweet-briar is a very beautiful glossy elliptical fruit. What with the fragrance of its leaves, its blossom, and its fruit, it is thrice crowned.

I observed to-day (October 17th) the small blueberry bushes by the path-side, now blood-red, full of white blossoms as in the spring, the blossoms of spring contrasting strangely with the leaves of autumn. The former seemed to have expanded from sympathy with the maturity of the leaves.

Walter Colton in his "California" [1] says, "Age is no certain evidence of merit, since folly runs to seed as fast as wisdom."

The imagination never forgives an insult.

Left Concord, Wednesday morning, September 25th, 1850, for Quebec. Fare $7.00 to and fro. Obliged to leave Montreal on return as soon as Friday, October 4th. The country was new to me beyond Fitchburg.

[1] [*Three Years in California*, 1850.]

In Ashburnham and afterwards I noticed the woodbine.[1]

[Eighty-four pages missing, — doubtless the Canada journal.]

However mean your life is, meet it and live; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perchance have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poorhouse. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the almshouse as brightly as from the rich man's house. The snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts as anywhere, and, indeed, the town's poor seem to live the most independent lives of any. They are simply great enough to receive without misgiving. Cultivate poverty like sage, like a garden herb. Do not trouble yourself to get new things, whether clothes or friends. That is dissipation. Turn the old; return to them. Things do not change; we change. If I were confined to a corner in a garret all my days, like a spider, the world would be just as large to me while I had my thoughts.[2]

In all my travels I never came to the abode of the present.

I live in the angle of a leaden wall, into whose alloy was poured a little bell-metal. Sometimes in the repose of my mid-day there reaches my ears a confused tintin-

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 3; Riv. 3.] [2] [*Walden*, p. 361; Riv. 505, 506.]

nabulum from without. It is the noise of my contemporaries.[1]

That the brilliant leaves of autumn are not withered ones is proved by the fact that they wilt when gathered as soon as the green.

But now, October 31st, they are all withered. This has been the most perfect afternoon in the year. The air quite warm enough, perfectly still and dry and clear, and not a cloud in the sky. Scarcely the song of a cricket is heard to disturb the stillness. When they ceased their song I do not know. I wonder that the impetus which our hearing had got did not hurry us into deafness over a precipitous silence. There must have been a thick web of cobwebs on the grass this morning, promising this fair day, for I see them still through the afternoon, covering not only the grass but the bushes and the trees. They are stretched across the unfrequented roads from weed to weed, and broken by the legs of the horses.

I thought to-day that it would be pleasing to study the dead and withered plants, the ghosts of plants, which now remain in the fields, for they fill almost as large a space to the eye as the green have done. They live not in memory only, but to the fancy and imagination.

As we were passing through Ashburnham, by a new white house which stood at some distance in a field, one passenger exclaimed so that all the passengers could hear him, "There, there's not so good a house as that in all Canada." And I did not much wonder at his remark. There is a neatness as well as thrift and elastic

[1] [*Walden*, p. 362; Riv. 507.]

comfort, a certain flexible easiness of circumstance when not rich, about a New England house which the Canadian houses do not suggest. Though of stone, they were no better constructed than a stone barn would be with us. The only building on which money and taste are expended is the church.[1] At Beauport we examined a magnificent cathedral, not quite completed, where I do not remember that there were any but the meanest houses in sight around it.

Our Indian summer, I am tempted to say, is the finest season of the year. Here has been such a day as I think Italy never sees.

Though it has been so warm to-day, I found some of the morning's frost still remaining under the north side of a wood, to my astonishment.

Why was this beautiful day made, and no man to improve it? We went through Seven-Star (?) Lane to White Pond.

Looking through a stately pine grove, I saw the western sun falling in golden streams through its aisles. Its west side, opposite to me, was all lit up with golden light; but what was I to it? Such sights remind me of houses which we never inhabit, — that commonly I am not at home in the world. I see somewhat fairer than I enjoy or possess.

A fair afternoon, a celestial afternoon, cannot occur but we mar our pleasure by reproaching ourselves that we do not make all our days beautiful. The thought of what I am, of my pitiful conduct, deters me from receiving what joy I might from the glorious days that visit me.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 100; Riv. 124.]

After the era of youth is passed, the knowledge of ourselves is an alloy that spoils our satisfactions.

I am wont to think that I could spend my days contentedly in any retired country house that I see; for I see it to advantage now and without incumbrance; I have not yet imported my humdrum thoughts, my prosaic habits, into it to mar the landscape. What is this beauty in the landscape but a certain fertility in me? I look in vain to see it realized but in my own life. If I could wholly cease to be ashamed of myself, I think that all my days would be fair.

When I asked at the principal bookstore in Montreal to see such books as were published there, the answer was that none were published there but those of a statistical character and the like, that their books came from the States.[1]

[Two thirds of a page missing]

As once he was riding past Jennie Dugan's, was invited by her boys to look into their mother's springhouse. He looked in. It *was* a delectable place to keep butter and milk cool and sweet in dog-days, — but there was a leopard frog swimming in the milk, and another sitting on the edge of the pan.

[Half a page missing.]

Thou art a personality so vast and universal that I have never seen one of thy features. I am suddenly very near to another land than can be bought and sold; this is not Charles Miles's swamp. This is a far, far-

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 15; Riv. 18.]

away field on the confines of the actual Concord, where nature is partially present. These farms I have myself surveyed; these lines I have run; these bounds I have set up; they have no chemistry to fix them; they fade from the surface of the glass (the picture); this light is too strong for them.

[Four and two thirds pages missing.]

My dear, my dewy sister, let thy rain descend on me. I not only love thee, but I love the best of thee; that is to love thee rarely. I do not love thee every day. Commonly I love those who are less than thou. I love thee only on great days. Thy dewy words feed me like the manna of the morning. I am as much thy sister as thy brother. Thou art as much my brother as my sister. It is a portion of thee and a portion of me which are of kin. Thou dost not have to woo me. I do not have to woo thee. O my sister! O Diana, thy tracks are on the eastern hills. Thou surely passedst that way. I, the hunter, saw them in the morning dew. My eyes are the hounds that pursue thee. Ah, my friend, what if I do not answer thee? I hear thee. Thou canst speak; I cannot. I hear and forget to answer. I am occupied with hearing. I awoke and thought of thee; thou wast present to my mind. How camest thou there? Was I not present to thee likewise? [1]

The oystermen had anchored their boat near the shore without regard to the state of the tide, and when we came to it to set sail, just after noon, we found that it was aground. Seeing that they were preparing to

[1] [Channing, pp. 70, 71; Sanborn, pp. 259, 260.]

push it off, I was about to take off my shoes and stockings in order to wade to it first, but a Dutch sailor with a singular bullfrog or trilobite expression of the eyes, whose eyes were like frog ponds in the broad platter of his cheeks and gleamed like a pool covered with frog-spittle, immediately offered me the use of his back. So mounting, with my legs under his arms, and hugging him like one of [the] family, he set me aboard of the periauger?

They then leaned their hardest against the stern, bracing their feet against the sandy bottom in two feet of water, the Dutchman with his broad back among them. In the most Dutch-like and easy way they applied themselves to this labor, while the skipper tried to raise the bows, never jerking or hustling but silently exerting what vigor was inherent in them, doing, no doubt, their utmost endeavor, while I pushed with a spike pole; but it was all in vain. It was decided to be unsuccessful; we did not disturb its bed by a grain of sand. "Well, what now?" said I. "How long have we got to wait?" "Till the tide rises," said the captain. But no man knew of the tide, how it was. So I went in to bathe, looking out for sharks and chasing crabs, and the Dutchman waded out among the mussels to spear a crab. The skipper stuck a clamshell into the sand at the water's edge to discover if it was rising, and the sailors, — the Dutchman and the other, — having got more drink at Oakes's, stretched themselves on the seaweed close to the water's edge [and] went to sleep. After an hour or more we could discover no change in the shell even by a hair's breadth, from which we learned

that it was about the turn of the tide and we must wait some hours longer.[1]

I once went in search of the relics of a human body — a week after a wreck — which had been cast up the day before on to the beach, though the sharks had stripped off the flesh. I got the direction from a lighthouse. I should find it a mile or two distant over the sand, a dozen rods from the water, by a stick which was stuck up covered with a cloth. Pursuing the direction pointed out, I expected that I should have to look very narrowly at the sand to find so small an object, but so completely smooth and bare was the beach — half a mile wide of sand — and so magnifying the mirage toward the sea that when I was half a mile distant the insignificant stick or sliver which marked the spot looked like a broken mast in the sand. As if there was no other object, this trifling sliver had puffed itself up to the vision to fill the void; and there lay the relics in a certain state, rendered perfectly inoffensive to both bodily and spiritual eye by the surrounding scenery, — a slight inequality in the sweep of the shore. Alone with the sea and the beach, attending to the sea, whose hollow roar seemed addressed to the ears of the departed, — articulate speech to them. It was as conspicuous on that sandy plain as if a generation had labored to pile up a cairn there. Where there were so few objects, the least was obvious as a mausoleum. It reigned over the shore. That dead body possessed the shore as no living one could. It showed a title to the sands which no living ruler could.[2]

[1] [See pp. 49–51.]

[2] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 107, 108; Riv. 126, 127. See also pp. 49–51 of this volume.]

My father was commissary at Fort Independence in the last war. He says that the baker whom he engaged returned eighteen ounces of bread for sixteen of flour, and was glad of the job on those terms.

In a pleasant spring morning all men's sins are forgiven. You may have known your neighbor yesterday for a drunkard and a thief, and merely pitied or despised him, and despaired of the world; but the sun shines bright and warm this first spring morning, and you meet him quietly, serenely at any work, and see how even his exhausted, debauched veins and nerves expand with still joy and bless the new day, feel the spring influence with the innocence [1] [Two thirds of a page missing.]

There is a good echo from that wood to one standing on the side of Fair Haven. It was particularly good to-day. The woodland lungs seemed particularly sound to-day; they echoed your shout with a fuller and rounder voice than it was given in, seeming to *mouth* it. It was uttered with a sort of sweeping intonation half round a vast circle, *ore rotundo*, by a broad dell among the tree-tops passing it round to the entrance of all the aisles of the wood. You had to choose the right key or pitch, else the woods would not echo it with any spirit, and so with eloquence. Of what significance is any sound if Nature does not echo it? It does not prevail. It dies away as soon as uttered. I wonder that wild men have not made more of echoes, or that we do

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 346, 347; Riv. 484, 485.]

not hear that they have made more. It would be a pleasant, a soothing and cheerful mission to go about the country in search of them, — articulating, speaking, vocal, oracular, resounding, sonorous, hollow, prophetic places; places wherein to found an oracle, sites for oracles, sacred ears of Nature.

I used to strike with a paddle on the side of my boat on Walden Pond, filling the surrounding woods with circling and dilating sound, awaking the woods, "stirring them up," as a keeper of a menagerie his lions and tigers, a growl from all. All melody is a sweet echo, as it were coincident with [the] movement of our organs. We wake the echo of the place we are in, its slumbering music.

I should think that savages would have made a god of echo.

I will call that Echo Wood.

Crystal Water for White Pond.

There was a sawmill once on Nut Meadow Brook, near Jennie's Road. These little brooks have their history. They once turned sawmills. They even used their *influence* to destroy the primitive [forests] which grew on their banks, and now, for their reward, the sun is let in to dry them up and narrow their channels. Their crime rebounds against themselves. You still find the traces of ancient dams where the simple brooks were taught to use their influence to destroy the primitive forests on their borders, and now for penalty they flow in shrunken channels, with repentant and plaintive tinkling through the wood, being by an evil spirit turned against their neighbor forests.

What does education often do? It makes a straight-cut ditch of a free, meandering brook.

You must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when it walks.

The actual life of men is not without a dramatic interest to the thinker. It is not in all its respects prosaic. Seventy thousand pilgrims proceed annually to Mecca from the various nations of Islam.

I was one evening passing a retired farmhouse which had a smooth green plat before it, just after sundown, when I saw a hen turkey which had gone to roost on the front fence with her wings outspread over her young now pretty well advanced, who were roosting on the next rail a foot or two below her. It completed a picture of rural repose and happiness such as I had not seen for a long time. A particularly neat and quiet place, where the very ground was swept around the wood-pile. The neighboring fence of roots, agreeable forms for the traveller to study, like the bones of marine monsters and the horns of mastodons or megatheriums.

You might say of a philosopher that he was in this world as a spectator.

A squaw came to our door to-day with two pappooses, and said, "Me want a pie." Theirs is not common begging. You are merely the rich Indian who shares his goods with the poor. They merely offer you an opportunity to be generous and hospitable.

Equally simple was the observation which an Indian made at Mr. Hoar's door the other day, who went there to sell his baskets. "No, we don't want any," said the one who went to the door. "What! do you mean to starve us?" asked the Indian in astonishment, as he was going out [*sic*] the gate. The Indian seems to have said: I too will do like the white man; I will go into business. He sees his white neighbors well off around him, and he thinks that if he only enters on the profession of basket-making, riches will flow in unto him as a matter of course; just as the lawyer weaves arguments, and by some magical means wealth and standing follow. He thinks that when he has made the baskets he has done his part, now it is yours to buy them. He has not discovered that it is necessary for him to make it worth your while to buy them, or make some which it will be worth your while to buy. With great simplicity he says to himself: I too will be a man of business; I will go into trade. It is n't enough simply to make baskets. You have got to sell them.[1]

I have an uncle who once, just as he stepped on to the dock at New York from a steamboat, saw some strange birds in the water and called to [a] Gothamite to know what they were. Just then his hat blew off into the dock, and the man answered by saying, "Mister, your hat is off," whereupon my uncle, straightening himself up, asked again with vehemence, "Blast you, sir, I want to know what those birds are." By the time that he had got this information, a sailor had recovered his hat.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 20, 21; Riv. 32.]

Nov. 8. The stillness of the woods and fields is remarkable at this season of the year. There is not even the creak of a cricket to be heard. Of myriads of dry shrub oak leaves, not one rustles. Your own breath can rustle them, yet the breath of heaven does not suffice to. The trees have the aspect of waiting for winter. The autumnal leaves have lost their color; they are now truly sere, dead, and the woods wear a sombre color. Summer and harvest are over. The hickories, birches, chestnuts, no less than the maples, have lost their leaves. The sprouts, which had shot up so vigorously to repair the damage which the choppers had done, have stopped short for the winter. Everything stands silent and expectant. If I listen, I hear only the note of a chickadee, — our most common and I may say native bird, most identified with our forests, — or perchance the scream of a jay, or perchance from the solemn depths of these woods I hear tolling far away the knell of one departed. Thought rushes in to fill the vacuum. As you walk, however, the partridge still bursts away. The silent, dry, almost leafless, certainly fruitless woods. You wonder what cheer that bird can find in them. The partridge bursts away from the foot of a shrub oak like its own dry fruit, immortal bird! This sound still startles us. Dry goldenrods, now turned gray and white, lint our clothes as we walk. And the drooping, downy seed-vessels of the epilobium remind us of the summer. Perchance you will meet with a few solitary asters in the dry fields, with a little color left. The sumach is stripped of everything but its cone of red berries.

This is a peculiar season, peculiar for its stillness. The crickets have ceased their song. The few birds are well-nigh silent. The tinted and gay leaves are now sere and dead, and the woods wear a sombre aspect. A carpet of snow under the pines and shrub oaks will make it look more cheerful. Very few plants have now their spring. But thoughts still spring in man's brain. There are no flowers nor berries to speak of. The grass begins to die at top. In the morning it is stiff with frost. Ice has been discovered in somebody's tub very early this morn, of the thickness of a dollar. The flies are betwixt life and death. The wasps come into the houses and settle on the walls and windows. All insects go into crevices. The fly is entangled in a web and struggles vainly to escape, but there is no spider to secure him; the corner of the pane is a deserted camp. When I lived in the woods the wasps came by thousands to my lodge in November, as to winter quarters, and settled on my windows and on the walls over my head, sometimes deterring visitors from entering. Each morning, when they were numbed with cold, I swept some of them out. But I did not trouble myself to get rid of them. They never molested me, though they bedded with me, and they gradually disappeared into what crevices I do not know, avoiding winter.[1] I saw a squash-bug go slowly behind a clapboard to avoid winter. As some of these melon seeds come up in the garden again in the spring, so some of these squash-bugs come forth. The flies are for a long time in a somnambulic state. They

[1] [*Walden*, p. 265 (Riv. 372, 373), where October is the month named.]

November Woods

This is a peculiar season, peculiar for its stillness. The crickets have ceased their song. The few birds are silent. The tinted and gay leaves are now sere and dead, and the woods wear a sombre aspect. A carpet of snow under the pines and shrub oaks will make it look more cheerful. Very few plants have now their spring. But thoughts still spring in man's brain. There are no flowers nor berries to speak of. The grass begins to die at top. In the morning it is stiff with frost. Ice has been discovered in somebody's tub very early this morn, of the thickness of a dollar. The flies are betwixt life and death. The wasps come into the houses and settle on the walls and windows. All insects go into crevices. The fly is entangled in a web and struggles vainly to escape, but there is no spider to secure him; the corner of the pane is a deserted camp. When I lived in the woods the wasps came by thousands to my lodge in November, as to winter quarters, and settled on my windows and on the walls over my head, sometimes deterring visitors from entering. Each morning, when they were numbed with cold, I swept some of them out. But I did not trouble myself to get rid of them. They never molested me, though they bedded with me, and they gradually disappeared into what crevices I do not know, avoiding winter.[1] I saw a squash-bug go slowly behind a clapboard to avoid winter. As some of these plants come up in the garden again in the spring, so some of these squash-bugs come forth. The flies are for a long time in a somnambulic state. They

[1] [illegible] October is the month [illegible]

have too little energy or *vis vitæ* to clean their wings or heads, which are covered with dust. They buzz and bump their heads against the windows two or three times a day, or lie on their backs in a trance, and that is all, — two or three short spurts. One of these mornings we shall hear that Mr. Minott had to break the ice to water his cow. And so it will go on till the ground freezes. If the race had never lived through a winter, what would they think was coming?

Walden Pond has at last fallen a little. It has been so high over the stones — quite into the bushes — that walkers have been excluded from it.[1] There has been no accessible shore. All ponds have been high. The water stood higher than usual in the distant ponds which I visited and had never seen before. It has been a peculiar season. At Goose Pond, I notice that the birches of one year's growth from the stumps standing in the water are all dead, apparently killed by the water, unless, like the pine, they die down after springing from the stump.

It is warm somewhere any day in the year. You will find some nook in the woods generally, at mid-forenoon of the most blustering day, where you may forget the cold. I used to resort to the northeast side of Walden, where the sun, reflected from the pine woods on the stony shore, made it the fireside of the pond. It is so much pleasanter and wholesomer to be warmed by the sun when you can, than by a fire.

I saw to-day a double reflection on the pond of the

[1] It reached its height in '52, and has now fallen decidedly in the fall of '53.

cars passing, one beneath the other, occasioned by a bright rippled streak on the surface of the water, from which a second reflection sprang.

One who would study lichens must go into a new country where the rocks have not been burned.

Therien says that the Canadians say *marche-donc* to their horses; and that the acid fruit must be spelled *painbéna*.[1] He says that the French acre or *arpent* is ten perches by ten, of eighteen feet each.

Nov. 9. It is a pleasant surprise to walk over a hill where an old wood has recently been cut off, and, on looking round, to see, instead of dense ranks of trees almost impermeable to light, distant well-known blue mountains in the horizon and perchance a white village over an expanded open country. I now take this in preference to all my old familiar walks. So a new prospect and walks can be created where we least expected it. The old men have seen other prospects from these hills than we do. There was the old Kettell place, now Watt's, which I surveyed for him last winter and lotted off, where twenty-five years ago I played horse in the paths of a thick wood and roasted apples and potatoes in an old pigeon-place [2] and gathered fruit at the pie-apple tree. A week or two after I surveyed it, it now being rotten and going to waste, I walked there and was surprised to find the place and prospect which I have described.

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 48; Riv. 59.]

[2] [See pp. 499, 500.]

I found many fresh violets (*Viola pedata*) to-day (November 9th) in the woods.

Saw a cat on the Great Fields, wilder than a rabbit, hunting artfully. I remember to have seen one once walking about the stony shore at Walden Pond. It is not often that they wander so far from the houses. I once, however, met with a cat with young kittens in the woods, quite wild.[1]

The leaves of the larch are now yellow and falling off. Just a month ago, I observed that the white pines were parti-colored, green and yellow, the needles of the previous year now falling. Now I do not observe any yellow ones, and I expect to find that it is only for a few weeks in the fall after the new leaves have done growing that there are any yellow and falling, — that there is a season when we may say the old pine leaves are now yellow, and again, they are fallen. The trees were not so tidy then; they are not so full now. They look best when contrasted with a field of snow.

A rusty sparrow or two only remains to people the drear spaces. It goes to roost without neighbors.

It is pleasant to observe any growth in a wood. There is the pitch pine field northeast of Beck Stow's Swamp, where some years ago I went a-blackberrying and observed that the pitch pines were beginning to come in, and I have frequently noticed since how fairly they grew, dotting the plain as evenly as if dispersed by art. To-day I was aware that I walked in a pitch pine wood, which ere long, perchance, I may survey and lot off for a wood auction and see the chop-

[1] [*Walden*, p. 257; Riv. 361, 362.]

pers at their work. There is also the old pigeon-place field by the Deep Cut. I remember it as an open grassy field. It is now one of our most pleasant woodland paths. In the former place, near the edge of the old wood, the young pines line each side of the path like a palisade, they grow so densely. It never rains but it pours, and so I think when I see a young grove of pitch pines crowding each other to death in this wide world. These are destined for the locomotive's maw. These branches, which it has taken so many years to mature, are regarded even by the woodman as "trash."

Delicate, dry, feathery (perchance fescue) grasses growing out of a tuft, gracefully bending over the pathway. I do not know what they are, but they belong to the season.

The chickadees, if I stand long enough, hop nearer and nearer inquisitively, from pine bough to pine bough, till within four or five feet, occasionally lisping a note.

The pitcher-plant, though a little frost-bitten and often cut off by the mower, now stands full of water in the meadows. I never found one that had not an insect in it.

I sometimes see well-preserved walls running straight through the midst of high and old woods, built, of course, when the soil was cultivated many years ago, and am surprised to see slight stones still lying one upon another, as the builder placed them, while this huge oak has grown up from a chance acorn in the soil.

Though a man were known to have only one acquaintance in the world, yet there are so many men in

the world, and they are so much alike, that when he spoke what might be construed personally, no one would know certainly whom he meant. Though there were but two on a desolate island, they would conduct toward each other in this respect as if each had intercourse with a thousand others.

I saw in Canada two or three persons wearing homespun gray greatcoats, with comical and conical hoods which fell back on their backs between the shoulders, like small bags ready to be turned up over the head when need was, though then a hat usurped that place. I saw that these must be what are called capots. They looked as if they would be convenient and proper enough as long as the coats were new and tidy, but as if they would soon come to look like rags and unsightly.[1]

Nov. 11. Gathered to-day the autumnal dandelion(?) and the common dandelion.

Some farmers' wives use the white ashes of corn-cobs instead of pearlash.

I am attracted by a fence made of white pine roots. There is, or rather was, one (for it has been tipped into the gutter this year) on the road to Hubbard's Bridge which I can remember for more than twenty years. It is almost as indestructible as a wall and certainly requires fewer repairs. It is light, white, and dry withal, and its fantastic forms are agreeable to my eye. One would not have believed that any trees had such snarled

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 99; Riv. 123.]

and gnarled roots. In some instances you have a coarse network of roots as they interlaced on the surface perhaps of a swamp, which, set on its edge, really looks like a fence, with its paling crossing at various angles, and root repeatedly growing into root, — a rare phenomenon above ground, — so as to leave open spaces, square and diamond-shaped and triangular, quite like a length of fence. It is remarkable how white and clean these roots are, and that no lichens, or very few, grow on them; so free from decay are they. The different branches of the roots continually grow into one another, so as to make grotesque figures, sometimes rude harps whose resonant strings of roots give a sort of musical sound when struck, such as the earth spirit might play on. Sometimes the roots are of a delicate wine-color here and there, an evening tint. No line of fence could be too long for me to study each individual stump. Rocks would have been covered with lichens by this time. Perhaps they are grown into one another that they may stand more firmly.

Now is the time for wild apples. I pluck them as a wild fruit native to this quarter of the earth, fruit of old trees that have been dying ever since I was a boy and are not yet dead. From the appearance of the tree you would expect nothing but lichens to drop from it, but underneath your faith is rewarded by finding the ground strewn with spirited fruit. Frequented only by the woodpecker, deserted now by the farmer, who has not faith enough to look under the boughs.[1] Food for walkers. Sometimes apples red inside, perfused with a

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 309; Riv. 379.]

beautiful blush, faery food, too beautiful to eat, — apple of the evening sky, of the Hesperides.[1]

This afternoon I heard a single cricket singing, chirruping, in a bank, the only one I have heard for a long time, like a squirrel or a little bird, clear and shrill, — as I fancied, like an evening robin, singing in this evening of the year. A very fine and poetical strain for such a little singer. I had never before heard the cricket so like a bird. It is a remarkable note. The earth-song.

That delicate, waving, feathery dry grass which I saw yesterday is to be remembered with the autumn. The dry grasses are not dead for me. A beautiful form has as much life at one season as another.

I notice that everywhere in the pastures minute young fragrant life-everlasting, with only four or five flat-lying leaves and thread-like roots, all together as big as a fourpence, spot the ground, like winter rye and grass which roots itself in the fall against another year. These little things have bespoken their places for the next season. They have a little pellet of cotton or down in their centres, ready for an early start in the spring.

The autumnal (?) dandelion is still bright.

I saw an old bone in the woods covered with lichens, which looked like the bone of an old settler, which yet some little animal had recently gnawed, and I plainly saw the marks of its teeth, so indefatigable is Nature to strip the flesh from bones and return it to dust again. No little rambling beast can go by some dry and ancient bone but he must turn aside and try his teeth upon it.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 315; Riv. 387.]

An old bone is knocked about till it becomes dust; Nature has no mercy on it. It was quite too ancient to suggest disagreeable associations. It was like a piece of dry pine root. It survives like the memory of a man. With time all that was personal and offensive wears off. The tooth of envy may sometimes gnaw it and reduce it more rapidly, but it is much more a prey to forgetfulness. Lichens grow upon it, and at last, in what moment no man knows, it has completely wasted away and ceases to be a bone any longer.

The fields are covered now with the empty cups of the *Trichostema dichotomum*, all dry.

We had a remarkable sunset to-night. I was walking in the meadow, the source of Nut Meadow Brook.[1]

[Two pages missing.]

We walked in so pure and bright a light, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or a murmur to it. The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium.[2] An adventurous spirit turns the evening into morning. A little black brook in the midst of the marsh, just beginning to meander, winding slowly round a decaying stump,— an artery of the meadow.[3]

Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk.

A people who would begin by burning the fences and let the forest stand! I saw the fences half consumed,

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 246; Riv. 302.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 247; Riv. 303.]
[3] [*Excursions*, p. 247; Riv. 303.]

their ends lost in the middle of the prairie, and some worldly miser with a surveyor looking after his bounds, while heaven had taken place around him, and he did not see the angels around, but was looking for an old post-hole in the midst of paradise. I looked again and saw him standing in the middle of a boggy Stygian fen, surrounded by devils, and he had found his bounds without a doubt, three little stones where a stake had been driven, and, looking nearer, I saw that the Prince of Darkness was his surveyor.[1]

Nov. 14. Saw to-day, while surveying in the Second Division woods, a singular round mound in a valley, made perhaps sixty or seventy years ago. Cyrus Stow thought it was a pigeon-bed, but I soon discovered the coal and that it was an old coal-pit. I once mistook one in the Maine woods for an Indian mound. The indestructible charcoal told the tale. I had noticed singular holes and trenches in the former wood, as if a fox had been dug out. The sun has probably been let in here many times, and this has been a cultivated field; and now it is clothed in a savage dress again. The wild, rank, luxuriant place is where mosses and lichens abound. We find no heroes' cairns except those of heroic colliers, who once sweated here begrimed and dingy, who lodged here, tending their fires, who lay on a beetle here, perchance, to keep awake.

Nov. 15. I saw to-day a very perfect lichen on a rock in a meadow. It formed a perfect circle about fifteen

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 212; Riv. 259, 260.]

inches in diameter though the rock was uneven, and was handsomely shaded by a darker stripe of older leaves, an inch or more wide, just within its circumference, like a rich lamp-mat. The recent growth on the outside, half an inch in width, was a sort of tea-green or bluish-green color.

The ivy berries are now sere and yellowish, or sand-colored, like the berries of the dogwood.

The farmers are now casting out their manure, and removing the muck-heap from the shore of ponds where it will be inaccessible in the winter; or are doing their fall plowing, which destroys many insects and mellows the soil. I also see some pulling their turnips, and even getting in corn which has been left out notwithstanding the crows. Those who have wood to sell, as the weather grows colder and people can better appreciate the value of fuel, lot off their woods and advertise a wood auction.

You can tell when a cat has seen a dog by the size of her tail.

Nov. 16. I found three good arrowheads to-day behind Dennis's. The season for them began some time ago, as soon as the farmers had sown their winter rye, but the spring, after the melting of the snow, is still better.

I am accustomed to regard the smallest brook with as much interest for the time being as if it were the Orinoco or Mississippi. What is the difference, I would like to know, but mere size? And when a tributary rill empties in, it is like the confluence of famous rivers I have read

of. When I cross one on a fence, I love to pause in mid-passage and look down into the water, and study its bottom, its little mystery. There is none so small but you may see a pickerel regarding you with a wary eye, or a pygmy trout glance from under the bank, or in spring, perchance, a sucker will have found its way far up its stream. You are sometimes astonished to see a pickerel far up some now shrunken rill, where it is a mere puddle by the roadside. I have stooped to drink at a clear spring no bigger than a bushel basket in a meadow, from which a rill was scarcely seen to dribble away, and seen lurking at its bottom two little pickerel not so big as my finger, sole monarchs of this their ocean, and who probably would never visit a larger water.

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is only another name for tameness. It is the untamed, uncivilized, free, and wild thinking in Hamlet, in the Iliad, and in all the scriptures and mythologies that delights us, — not learned in the schools, not refined and polished by art. A truly good book is something as wildly natural and primitive, mysterious and marvellous, ambrosial and fertile, as a fungus or a lichen.[1] Suppose the muskrat or beaver were to turn his views [*sic*] to literature, what fresh views of nature would he present! The fault of our books and other deeds is that they are too humane, I want something speaking in some measure to the condition of muskrats and skunk-cabbage as well as of men, — not merely to a pining and complaining coterie of philanthropists.

I discover again about these times that cranberries are

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 231; Riv. 283.]

good to eat in small quantities as you are crossing the meadows.

I hear deep amid the birches some row among the birds or the squirrels, where evidently some mystery is being developed to them. The jay is on the alert, mimicking every woodland note. What *has* happened? Who's dead? The twitter retreats before you, and you are never let into the secret. Some tragedy surely is being enacted, but murder will out. How many little dramas are enacted in the depth of the woods at which man is not present!

When I am considering which way I will walk, my needle is slow to settle, my compass varies by a few degrees and does not always point due southwest; and there is good authority for these variations in the heavens. It pursues the straighter course for it at last, like the ball which has come out of a rifle, or the quoit that is twirled when cast. To-day it is some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture in that direction that is my southwest.[1]

I love my friends very much, but I find that it is of no use to go to see them. I hate them commonly when I am near them. They belie themselves and deny me continually.

Somebody shut the cat's tail in the door just now, and she made such a caterwaul as has driven two whole worlds out of my thoughts. I saw unspeakable things in the sky and looming in the horizon of my mind, and now they are all reduced to a cat's tail. Vast films of thought floated through my brain, like clouds pregnant

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 217; Riv. 266.]

with rain enough to fertilize and restore a world, and now they are all dissipated.

There is a place whither I should walk to-day. Though oftenest I fail to find, when by accident I ramble into it, great is my delight. I have stood by my door sometimes half an hour, irresolute as to what course I should take.[1]

Apparently all but the evergreens and oaks have lost their leaves now. It is singular that the shrub oaks retain their leaves through the winter. Why do they?

The walnut trees spot the sky with black nuts. Only catkins are seen on the birches.

I saw the other day a dead limb which the wind or some other cause had broken nearly off, which had lost none of its leaves, though all the rest of the tree, which was flourishing, had shed them.

There seems to be in the fall a sort of attempt at a spring, a rejuvenescence, as if the winter were not expected by a part of nature. Violets, dandelions, and some other flowers blossom again, and mulleins and innumerable other plants begin again to spring and are only checked by the increasing cold. There is a slight uncertainty whether there will be any winter this year.

I was pleased to-day to hear a great noise and trampling in the woods produced by some cows which came running toward their homes, which apparently had been scared by something unusual, as their ancestors might have been by wolves. I have known sheep to be scared in the same [way] and a whole flock to run bleating to me for protection.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 217; Riv. 265, 266.]

What shall we do with a man who is afraid of the woods, their solitude and darkness? What salvation is there for him? God is silent and mysterious.

Some of our richest days are those in which no sun shines outwardly, but so much the more a sun shines inwardly. I love nature, I love the landscape, because it is so sincere. It never cheats me. It never jests. It is cheerfully, musically earnest. I lie and relie [*sic*] on the earth.

Land where the wood has been cut off and is just beginning to come up again is called sprout land.

The sweet-scented life-everlasting has not lost its scent yet, but smells like the balm of the fields.

The partridge-berry leaves checker the ground on the side of moist hillsides in the woods. Are *they* not properly called *checker*-berries?

The era of wild apples will soon be over. I wander through old orchards of great extent, now all gone to decay, all of native fruit which for the most part went to the cider-mill. But since the temperance reform and the general introduction of grafted fruit, no wild apples, such as I see everywhere in deserted pastures, and where the woods have grown up among them, are set out. I fear that he who walks over these hills a century hence will not know the pleasure of knocking off wild apples. Ah, poor man! there are many pleasures which he will be debarred from! Notwithstanding the prevalence of the Baldwin and the Porter, I doubt if as extensive orchards are set out to-day in this town as there were a century ago, when these vast straggling cider-orchards were planted. Men stuck in a tree then by every wall-

side and let it take its chance. I see nobody planting trees to-day in such out of the way places, along almost every road and lane and wall-side, and at the bottom of dells in the wood. Now that they have grafted trees and pay a price for them, they collect them into a plot by their houses and fence them in.[1]

My Journal should be the record of my love. I would write in it only of the things I love, my affection for any aspect of the world, what I love to think of. I have no more distinctness or pointedness in my yearnings than an expanding bud, which does indeed point to flower and fruit, to summer and autumn, but is aware of the warm sun and spring influence only. I feel ripe for something, yet do nothing, can't discover what that thing is. I feel fertile merely. It is seedtime with me. I have lain fallow long enough.

Notwithstanding a sense of unworthiness which possesses me, not without reason, notwithstanding that I regard myself as a good deal of a scamp, yet for the most part the spirit of the universe is unaccountably kind to me, and I enjoy perhaps an unusual share of happiness. Yet I question sometimes if there is not some settlement to come.

Nov. 17. It is a strange age of the world this, when empires, kingdoms, and republics come a-begging to our doors and utter their complaints at our elbows. I cannot take up a newspaper but I find that some wretched government or other, hard pushed and on its last legs, is interceding with me, the reader, to vote for it, —

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 321; Riv. 394, 395.]

more importunate than an Italian beggar. Why does it not keep its castle in silence, as I do? The poor President, what with preserving his popularity and doing his duty, does not know what to do. If you do not read the newspapers, you may be impeached for treason. The newspapers are the ruling power. What Congress does is an afterclap. Any other government is reduced to a few marines at Fort Independence. If a man neglects to read the Daily Times, government will go on its knees to him; this is the only treason in these days. The newspapers devote some of their columns specially to government and politics without charge, and this is all that saves it, but I never read those columns.[1]

I found this afternoon, in a field of winter rye, a snapping turtle's egg, white and elliptical like a pebble, mistaking it for which I broke it. The little turtle was perfectly formed, even to the dorsal ridge, which was distinctly visible.

"Chesipooc Sinus" is on Wytfliet's Map of 159–.

Even the Dutch were forward to claim the great river of Canada. In a map of New Belgium in Ogilby's "America," 1670, the St. Lawrence is also called "De Groote Rivier van Niew Nederlandt." [2]

On this same map, east of Lake Champlain, called "Lacus Irocoisiensis" or in Dutch "Meer der Irocoisen," is a chain of mountains answering to the Green Mountains of Vermont, and "Irocoisia," or the country of the Iroquois, between the mountains and the lake.

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 480, 481; *Misc.*, Riv. 285, 286.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 91; Riv. 113.]

Nov. 19. The first really cold day. I find, on breaking off a shrub oak leaf, a little life at the foot of the leaf-stalk, so that a part of the green comes off. It has not died quite down to the point of separation, as it will do, I suppose, before spring. Most of the oaks have lost their leaves except on the lower branches, as if they were less exposed and less mature there, and felt the changes of the seasons less. The leaves have either fallen or withered long since, yet I found this afternoon, cold as it is, — and there has been snow in the neighborhood, — some sprouts which had come up this year from the stump of a young black-looking oak, covered still with handsome fresh red and green leaves, very large and unwithered and unwilted. It was on the south side of Fair Haven in a warm angle, where the wood was cut last winter and the exposed edge of the still standing wood running north and south met the cliff at right angles and served for a fence to keep off the wind. There were one or two stumps here whose sprouts had fresh leaves which transported me back to October. Yet the surrounding shrub oak leaves were as dry and dead as usual. There were also some minute birches only a year old, their leaves still freshly yellow, and some young wild apple trees apparently still growing, their leaves as green and tender as in summer. The goldenrods, one or more species of the white and some yellow ones, were many of them still quite fresh, though elsewhere they are all whitish and dry. I saw one whose top rose above the edge of a rock, and so much of it was turned white and dry; but the lower part of its raceme was still yellow. Some of the white species seemed to have started

again as if for another spring. They had sprung up freshly a foot or more, and were budded to blossom, fresh and green. And sometimes on the same stem were old and dry and white downy flowers, and fresh green blossom-buds not yet expanded. I saw there some *pale* blue asters still bright, and the mullein leaves still large and green, one green to its top. And I discovered that when I put my hand on the mullein leaves they felt decidedly warm, but the radical leaves of the golden-rods felt cold and clammy. There was also the columbine, its leaves still alive and green; and I was pleased to smell the pennyroyal which I had bruised, though this dried up long ago. Each season is thus drawn out and lingers in certain localities, as the birds and insects know very well. If you penetrate to some warm recess under a cliff in the woods, you will be astonished at the amount of summer life that still flourishes there. No doubt more of the summer's life than we are aware thus slips by and outmanœuvres the winter, gliding from fence to fence. I have no doubt that a diligent search in proper places would discover many more of our summer flowers thus lingering till the snow came, than we suspect. It is as if the plant made no preparation for winter.

Now that the grass is withered and the leaves are withered or fallen, it begins to appear what is evergreen: the partridge[-berry] and checkerberry, and winter-green leaves even, are more conspicuous.

The old leaves have been off the pines now for a month.

I once found a kernel of corn in the middle of a deep wood by Walden, tucked in behind a lichen on a pine,

about as high as my head, either by a crow or a squirrel. It was a mile at least from any corn-field.

Several species plainly linger till the snow comes.

Nov. 20. It is a common saying among country people that if you eat much fried hasty pudding it will make your hair curl. My experience, which was considerable, did not confirm this assertion.

Horace Hosmer was picking out to-day half a bushel or more of a different and better kind of cranberry, as he thought, separating them from the rest. They are very dark red, shaded with lighter, harder and more oblong, somewhat like the fruit of the sweet-briar or a Canada red plum, though I have no common cranberry to compare with them. He says that they grow apart from the others. I must see him about it. It may prove to be one more of those instances in which the farmer detects a new species and makes use of the knowledge from year to year in his profession, while the botanist expressly devoted to such investigation has failed to observe it.

The farmer, in picking over many bushels of cranberries year after year, finds at length, or has forced upon his observation, a new species of that berry, and avails himself thereafter of his discovery for many years before the naturalist is aware of the fact.

Desor, who has been among the Indians at Lake Superior this summer, told me the other day that they had a particular name for each species of tree, as of the maple, but they had but one word for flowers; they did not distinguish the species of the last.

It is often the unscientific man who discovers the new species. It would be strange if it were not so. But we are accustomed properly to call that only a scientific discovery which knows the relative value of the thing discovered, uncovers a fact to mankind.

Nov. 21. For a month past the grass under the pines has been covered with a new carpet of pine leaves. It is remarkable that the old leaves turn and fall in so short a time.

Some of the densest and most impenetrable clumps of bushes I have seen, as well on account of the closeness of their branches as of their thorns, have been wild apples. Its [*sic*] branches as stiff as those of the black spruce on the tops of mountains.[1]

I saw a herd of a dozen cows and young steers and oxen on Conantum this afternoon, running about and frisking in unwieldy sport like huge rats. Any sportiveness in cattle is unexpected. They even played like kittens, in their way; shook their heads, raised their tails, and rushed up and down the hill.[2]

The witch-hazel blossom on Conantum has for the most part lost its ribbons now.

Some distant angle in the sun where a lofty and dense white pine wood, with mingled gray and green, meets a hill covered with shrub oaks, affects me singularly, reinspiring me with all the dreams of my youth. It is a place far away, yet actual and where we have been. I saw the sun falling on a distant white pine wood whose gray and

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 304; Riv. 373.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 235; Riv. 287, 288.]

moss-covered stems were visible amid the green, in an angle where this forest abutted on a hill covered with shrub oaks. It was like looking into dreamland. It is one of the avenues to my future. Certain coincidences like this are accompanied by a certain flash as of hazy lightning, flooding all the world suddenly with a tremulous serene light which it is difficult to see long at a time.

I saw Fair Haven Pond with its island, and meadow between the island and the shore, and a strip of perfectly still and smooth water in the lee of the island, and two hawks, fish hawks perhaps, sailing over it. I did not see how it could be improved. Yet I do not see what these things can be. I begin to see such an object when I cease to *understand* it and see that I did not realize or appreciate it before, but I get no further than this. How adapted these forms and colors to my eye! A meadow and an island! What are these things? Yet the hawks and the ducks keep so aloof! and Nature is so reserved! I am made to love the pond and the meadow, as the wind is made to ripple the water.[1]

As I looked on the Walden woods eastward across the pond, I saw suddenly a white cloud rising above their tops, now here, now there, marking the progress of the cars which were rolling toward Boston far below, behind many hills and woods.

October must be the month of ripe and tinted leaves. Throughout November they are almost entirely withered and sombre, the few that remain. In this month the sun is valued. When it shines warmer or brighter we are sure to observe it. There are not so many colors to attract

[1] [See p. 161.]

the eye. We begin to remember the summer. We walk fast to keep warm. For a month past I have sat by a fire.

Every sunset inspires me with the desire to go to a *West* as distant and as fair as that into which the sun goes down.[1]

I get nothing to eat in my walks now but wild apples, sometimes some cranberries, and some walnuts. The squirrels have got the hazelnuts and chestnuts.

Nov. 23. To-day it has been finger-cold.[2] Unexpectedly I found ice by the side of the brooks this afternoon nearly an inch thick. Prudent people get in their barrels of apples to-day.[3] The difference of the temperature of various localities is greater than is supposed. If I was surprised to find ice on the sides of the brooks, I was much more surprised to find quite a pond in the woods, containing an acre or more, quite frozen over so that I walked across it. It was in a cold corner, where a pine wood excluded the sun. In the larger ponds and the river, of course, there is no ice yet. It is a shallow, weedy pond. I lay down on the ice and looked through at the bottom. The plants appeared to grow more uprightly than on the dry land, being sustained and protected by the water. Caddis-worms were everywhere crawling about in their handsome quiver-like sheaths or cases.

The wild apples, though they are more mellow and edible, have for some time lost their beauty, as well as

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 219; Riv. 268.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 319; Riv. 392.]
[3] [*Ibid.*]

the leaves, and now too they are beginning to freeze. The apple season is well-nigh over. Such, however, as are frozen while sound are not unpleasant to eat when the spring sun thaws them.[1]

I find it to be the height of wisdom not to endeavor to oversee myself and live a life of prudence and common sense, but to see over and above myself, entertain sublime conjectures, to make myself the thoroughfare of thrilling thoughts, live all that can be lived. The man who is dissatisfied with himself, what can he not do?

Nov. 24. Plucked a buttercup on Bear Hill to-day.

I have certain friends whom I visit occasionally, but I commonly part from them early with a certain bitter-sweet sentiment. That which we love is so mixed and entangled with that we hate in one another that we are more grieved and disappointed, aye, and estranged from one another, by meeting than by absence. Some men may be my acquaintances merely, but one whom I have been accustomed to regard, to idealize, to have dreams about as a friend, and mix up intimately with myself, can never degenerate into an acquaintance. I must know him on that higher ground or not know him at all. We do not confess and explain, because we would fain be so intimately related as to understand each other without speech. Our friend must be broad. His must be an atmosphere coextensive with the universe, in which we can expand and breathe. For the most part we are smothered and stifled by one another. I go and see my friend and try his atmosphere. If our

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 319; Riv. 392.]

atmospheres do not mingle, if we repel each other strongly, it is of no use to stay.

Nov. 25. I feel a little alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. I would fain forget all my morning's occupation, my obligations to society. But sometimes it happens that I cannot easily shake off the village; the thought of some work, some surveying, will run in my head, and I am not where my body is, I am out of my senses. In my walks I would return to my senses like a bird or a beast. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? [1]

This afternoon, late and cold as it is, has been a sort of Indian summer. Indeed, I think that we have summer days from time to time the winter through, and that it is often the snow on the ground makes the whole difference. This afternoon the air was indescribably clear and exhilarating, and though the thermometer would have shown it to be cold, I thought that there was a finer and purer warmth than in summer; a wholesome, intellectual warmth, in which the body was warmed by the mind's contentment. The warmth was hardly sensuous, but rather the satisfaction of existence.

I found Fair Haven skimmed entirely over, though the stones which I threw down on it from the high bank on the east broke through. Yet the river was open. The landscape looked singularly clean and pure and dry, the air, like a pure glass, being laid over the picture,

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 211; Riv. 258, 259.]

the trees so tidy, stripped of their leaves; the meadows and pastures, clothed with clean dry grass, looked as if they had been swept; ice on the water and winter in the air, but yet not a particle of snow on the ground. The woods, divested in great part of their leaves, are being ventilated. It is the season of perfect works, of hard, tough, ripe twigs, not of tender buds and leaves. The leaves have made their wood, and a myriad new withes stand up all around pointing to the sky, able to survive the cold. It is only the perennial that you see, the iron age of the year.

These expansions of the river skim over before the river itself takes on its icy fetters. What is the analogy?

I saw a muskrat come out of a hole in the ice. He is a man wilder than Ray or Melvin. While I am looking at him, I am thinking what he is thinking of me. He is a different sort of a man, that is all. He would dive when I went nearer, then reappear again, and had kept open a place five or six feet square so that it had not frozen, by swimming about in it. Then he would sit on the edge of the ice and busy himself about something, I could not see whether it was a clam or not. What a cold-blooded fellow! thoughts at a low temperature, sitting perfectly still so long on ice covered with water, mumbling a cold, wet clam in its shell. What safe, low, moderate thoughts it must have! It does not get on to stilts. The generations of muskrats do not fail. They are not preserved by the legislature of Massachusetts.

Boats are drawn up high which will not be launched again till spring.

There is a beautiful fine wild grass which grows in the path in sprout land, now dry, white, and waving, in light beds soft to the touch.

I experience such an interior comfort, far removed from the sense of cold, as if the thin atmosphere were rarefied by heat, were the medium of invisible flames, as if the whole landscape were one great hearthside, that where the shrub oak leaves rustle on the hillside, I seem to hear a crackling fire and see the pure flame, and I wonder that the dry leaves do not blaze into yellow flames.

I find but little change yet on the south side of the Cliffs; only the leaves of the wild apple are a little frostbitten on their edges and curled dry there; but some wild cherry leaves and blueberries are still fresh and tender green and red, as well as all the other leaves and plants which I noticed there the other day.

When I got up so high on the side of the Cliff the sun was setting like an Indian-summer sun. There was a purple tint in the horizon. It was warm on the face of the rocks, and I could have sat till the sun disappeared, to dream there. It was a mild sunset such as is to be attended to. Just as the sun shines into us warmly and serenely, our Creator breathes on us and re-creates us.

Nov. 26. An inch of snow on ground this morning, — our first.

Went to-night to see the Indians, who are still living in tents. Showed the horns of the moose, the black moose they call it, that goes in lowlands. Horns three

or four feet wide. (The red moose they say is another kind; runs on mountains and has horns six feet wide.) Can move their horns. The broad, flat side portions of the horns are covered with hair, and are so soft when the creature is alive that you can run a knife through them.[1] They color the lower portions a darker color by rubbing them on alders, etc., to harden them. Make *kee-nong-gun* or pappoose cradle, of the broad part of the horn, putting a rim on it. Once scared, will run all day. A dog will hang to their lips and be carried along and swung against a tree and drop off. Always find two or three together. Can't run on glare ice, but can run in snow four feet deep. The caribou can run on ice.[2] Sometimes spear them with a sharp pole, sometimes with a knife at the end of a pole. Signs, good or bad, from the turn of the horns. Their caribou-horns had been gnawed by mice in their wigwams. The moose-horns and others are not gnawed by mice while the creature is alive. Moose cover themselves with water, all but noses, to escape flies.[3] About as many now as fifty years ago.

Imitated the sounds of the moose, caribou, and deer with a birch-bark horn, which last they sometimes make very long. The moose can be heard eight or ten miles sometimes, — a loud sort of bellowing sound, clearer, more sonorous than the looing of cattle. The caribou's, a sort of snort; the small deer, like a lamb.

Made their clothes of the young moose-skin. Cure the meat by smoking it; use no salt in curing it, but when they eat it.

[1] [*Maine Woods*, p. 153; Riv. 187.] [2] [*Ibid.*] [3] [*Ibid.*]

Their spear very serviceable. The inner, pointed part, of a hemlock knot; the side spring pieces, of hickory. Spear salmon, pickerel, trout, chub, etc.; also by birch-bark light at night, using the other end of spear as pole.

Their sled, *jeborgon* or *jebongon* (?), one foot wide, four or five long, of thin wood turned up in front; draw by a strong rope of basswood bark.

Canoe of moose-hide. One hide will hold three or four. Can be taken apart and put together very quickly. Can take out cross-bars and bring the sides together. A very convenient boat to carry and cross streams with. They say they did not make birch canoes till they had edge tools. The birches the lightest. They think our birches the same, only second growth.

Their *kee-nong-gun*, or cradle, has a hoop to prevent the child being hurt when it falls. Can't eat dirt; can be hung up out of way of snakes.

Aboak-henjo [?], a birch-bark vessel for water. Can boil meat in it with hot stones; takes a long time. Also a vessel of birch bark, shaped like a pan. Both ornamented by scratching the bark, which is wrong side out. Very neatly made. Valued our kettles much.

Did not know use of eye in axe. Put a string through it and wore it round neck. Cut toes.

Did not like gun. Killed one moose; scared all the rest.

The *squaw-heegun* for cooking, a mere stick put

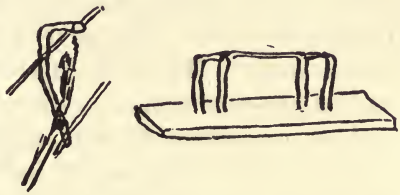
through the game and stuck in the ground slanted over the fire, a spit. Can be eating one side while the other is doing.

The *ar-tu-e-se*, a stick, string, and bunch of leaves, which they toss and catch on the point of the stick. Make great use of it. Make the clouds go off the sun with it.

Snowshoes of two kinds; one of same shape at both ends so that the Mohawks could not tell which way they were going. (Put some rags in the heel-hole to make a toe-mark?)

Log trap to catch many kinds of animals. Some for bears let the log fall six or seven feet. First there is a frame, then the little stick which the animal moves, presses down, as he goes through under the log; then the crooked stick is hung over the top of the frame, and holds up the log by a string; the weight of the log on this keeps the little stick up.

Side View



A drizzling and misty day this has been, melting the snow. The mist, divided into a thousand ghostly forms, was blowing across Walden. Mr. Emerson's Cliff Hill, seen from the railroad through the mist, looked like a dark, heavy, frowning New Hampshire mountain. I do not understand fully why hills look so much larger

at such a time, unless, being the most distant we see and in the horizon, we suppose them farther off and so magnify them. I think there can be no looming about it.

Nov. 28. Thursday. Cold drizzling and misty rains, which have melted the little snow. The farmers are beginning to pick up their dead wood. Within a day or two the walker finds gloves to be comfortable, and begins to think of an outside coat and of boots. Embarks in his boots for the winter voyage.

The Indian talked about "our folks" and "your folks," "my grandfather" and "my grandfather's cousin," Samoset.

It is remarkable, but nevertheless true, as far as my observation goes, that women, to whom we commonly concede a somewhat finer and more sibylline nature, yield a more implicit obedience even to their animal instincts than men. The nature in them is stronger, the reason weaker. There are, for instance, many young and middle-aged men among my acquaintance — shoemakers, carpenters, farmers, and others — who have scruples about using animal food, but comparatively few girls or women. The latter, even the most refined, are the most intolerant of such reforms. I think that the reformer of the severest, as well as finest, class will find more sympathy in the intellect and philosophy of man than in the refinement and delicacy of woman. It is, perchance, a part of woman's conformity and easy nature. Her savior must not be too strong, stern, and intellectual, but charitable above all things.

The thought of its greater independence and its close-

ness to nature diminishes the pain I feel when I see a more interesting child than usual destined to be brought up in a shanty. I see that for the present the child is happy and is not puny, and has all the wonders of nature for its toys. Have I not faith that its tenderness will in some way be cherished and protected, as the buds of the spring in the remotest and wildest wintry dell no less than in the garden plot and summer-house?

I am the little Irish boy
That lives in the shanty.
I am four years old to-day
And shall soon be one and twenty.

I shall grow up
And be a great man,
And shovel all day
As hard as I can.

Down in the Deep Cut,
. . . . .
Where the men lived
Who made the railroad.

For supper
I have some potato
And sometimes some bread,
And then, if it's cold,
I go right to bed.

I lie on some straw
Under my father's coat.

At recess I play
With little Billy Gray,
And when school is done,
Then home I run.

And if I meet the cars,
I get on the other track,
And then I know whatever comes
I need n't look back.

My mother does not cry,
And my father does not scold,
For I am a little Irish boy,
And I 'm four years old.

Every day I go to school
Along the railroad.
It was so cold it made me cry
The day that it snowed.

And if my feet ache
I do not mind the cold,
For I am a little Irish boy,
And I 'm four years old.[1]

Nov. 29. Still misty, drizzling weather without snow or ice. The puffballs, with their open rays, checker the path-side in the woods, but they are not yet dry enough to make much dust. Damp weather in the fall seems to cause them to crack open, *i. e.* their outer skin.

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. iii, pp. 149, 150, 241–244.]

They look white like the shells of five-fingers on the shore.

The trees and shrubs look larger than usual when seen through the mist, perhaps because, though near, yet being in the visible horizon and there being nothing beyond to compare them with, we naturally magnify them, supposing them further off.

It is very still yet in the woods. There are no leaves to rustle, no crickets to chirp, and but few birds to sing.

The pines standing in the ocean of mist, seen from the Cliffs, are trees in every stage of transition from the actual to the imaginary. The near are more distinct, the distant more faint, till at last they are a mere shadowy cone in the distance. What, then, are these solid pines become? You can command only a circle of thirty or forty rods in diameter. As you advance, the trees gradually come out of the mist and take form before your eyes. You are reminded of your dreams. Life looks like a dream. You are prepared to see visions. And now, just before sundown, the night wind blows up more mist through the valley, thickening the veil which already hung over the trees, and the gloom of night gathers early and rapidly around. Birds lose their way.

II

DECEMBER, 1850

(ÆT. 33)

Dec. 1. It is quite mild and pleasant to-day. I saw a little green hemisphere of moss which looked as if it covered a stone, but, thrusting my cane into it, I found it was nothing but moss, about fifteen inches in diameter and eight or nine inches high. When I broke it up, it appeared as if the annual growth was marked by successive layers half an inch deep each. The lower ones were quite rotten, but the present year's quite green, the intermediate white. I counted fifteen or eighteen. It was quite solid, and I saw that it continued solid as it grew by branching occasionally, just enough to fill the newly gained space, and the tender extremities of each plant, crowded close together, made the firm and compact surface of the bed. There was a darker line separating the growths, where I thought the surface had been exposed to the winter. It was quite saturated with water, though firm and solid.

Dec. 2. The woodpeckers' holes in the apple trees are about a fifth of an inch deep or just through the bark and half an inch apart. They must be the decaying trees that are most frequented by them, and probably their work serves to relieve and ventilate the tree and, as well, to destroy its enemies.

The barberries are shrivelled and dried. I find yet cranberries hard and not touched by the frost.

Dec. 4. *Wednesday.* Fair Haven Pond is now open, and there is no snow. It is a beautiful, almost Indian-summer, afternoon, though the air is more pure and glassy. The shrub oak fire burns briskly as seen from the Cliffs. The evergreens are greener than ever. I notice the row of dwarf willows advanced into the water in Fair Haven, three or four rods from the dry land, just at the lowest water-mark. You can get no disease but cold in such an atmosphere.

Though the sun is now an hour high, there is a peculiar bright light on the pines and on their stems. The lichens on their bark reflect it. In the horizon I see a succession of the brows of hills, bare or covered with wood, — look over the eyebrows of the recumbent earth. These are separated by long valleys filled with vapory haze.

If there is a little more warmth than usual at this season, then the beautiful air which belongs to winter is perceived and appreciated.

Dec. 6. Being at Newburyport this evening, Dr. (H. C.?) Perkins showed me the circulations in the nitella, which is slightly different from the chara, under a microscope. I saw plainly the circulation, looking like bubbles going round in each joint, up one side and down the other of a sort of white line, and sometimes a dark-colored mote appeared to be carried along with them. He said that the circulation could be well seen in the common celandine, and moreover that when a shade

was cast on it by a knife-blade the circulation was reversed. Ether would stop it, or the death of the plant.

He showed me a green clamshell, — *Anodon fluviatilis*, — which he said was a *female* with young, found in a pond near by.

Also the head of a Chinook or Flathead.

Also the humerus of a mylodon (of Owen) from Oregon. Some more remains have been found in Missouri, and a whole skeleton in Buenos Ayres. A digging animal.

He could not catch his frogs asleep.

Dec. 8. It snowed in the night of the 6th, and the ground is now covered, — our first snow, two inches deep. A week ago I saw cows being driven home from pasture. Now they are kept at home. Here's an end to their grazing. The farmer improves this first slight snow to accomplish some pressing jobs, — to move some particular rocks on a drag, or the like. I perceive how quickly he has seized the opportunity. I see no tracks now of cows or men or boys beyond the edge of the wood. Suddenly they are shut up. The remote pastures and hills beyond the woods are now closed to cows and cowherds, aye, and to cowards. I am struck by this sudden solitude and remoteness which these places have acquired. The dear privacy and retirement and solitude which winter makes possible! carpeting the earth with snow, furnishing more than woolen feet to all walkers, cronching the snow only. From Fair Haven I see the hills and fields, aye, and the icy woods in the corner

First Snow

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shine, gleam with the dear old wintry sheen. Those are not surely the cottages I have seen all summer. They are some cottages which I have in my mind.

Now Fair Haven Pond is open and ground is covered with snow and ice; a week or two ago the pond was frozen and the ground was still bare.

Still those particular red oak leaves which I had noticed are quite unwilted under the cliffs, and the apple leaves, though standing in snow and ice and incrusted with the latter, still ripe red, and *tender* fresh green leaves.

It is interesting to observe the manner in which the plants bear their snowy burden. The dry calyx leaves, like an oblong cup, of the *Trichostema dichotomum* have caught the rain or melting snow, and so this little butter-boat is filled with a frozen pure drop which stands up high above the sides of the cup, — so many pearly drops covering the whole plant, — in the wood-paths. The pennyroyal there also retains its fragrance under the ice and snow.

I find that the indigo-weed, whose *shade* still stands and holds its black seed-vessels, is not too humble to escape enemies. Almost every seed-vessel, which contains half a dozen seeds or more, contains also a little black six-legged bug about as big as a bug [*sic*], which gnaws the seeds; and sometimes I find a grub, though it is now cold weather and the plant is covered with ice. Not only our peas and grain have their weevils, but the fruit of the indigo-weed!

This evening for the first time the new moon is reflected from the frozen snow-crust.

Dec. 13. The river froze over last night, — skimmed over.

Dec. 16. Walden is open still. The river is probably open again.

There are wild men living along the shores of the Frozen Ocean. Who shall say that there is not as great an interval between the civilized man and the savage as between the savage and the brute? The undiscovered polar regions are the home of men.

I am struck with the difference between my feet and my hands. My feet are much nearer to foreign or inanimate matter or nature than my hands; they are more brute, they are more like the earth they tread on, they are more clod-like and lumpish, and I scarcely animate them.

Last Sunday, or the 14th, I walked on Loring's Pond to three or four islands there which I had never visited, not having a boat in the summer. On one containing an acre or two, I found a low, branching shrub frozen into the edge of the ice, with a fine spicy scent somewhat like sweet-fern and a handsome imbricate bud. When I rubbed the dry-looking fruit in my hands, it felt greasy and stained them a permanent yellow, which I could not wash out; it lasted several days, and my fingers smelled medicinal. I conclude that it is sweet-gale, and we named the island Myrica Island.

On those unfrequented islands, too, I noticed the red osier or willow, that common hard-berried plant with small red buds,[1] apparently two kinds of swamp-pink buds, some yellow, some reddish, a brittle, rough yellow-

[1] Panicled andromeda.

ish bush with handsome pinkish shoots; in one place in the meadow the greatest quantity of wild rose hips of various forms that I ever saw, now slightly withered; they were as thick as winterberries.

I noticed a bush covered with cocoons which were artfully concealed by two leaves wrapped round them, one still hanging by its stem, so that they looked like a few withered leaves left dangling. The worm, having first encased itself in another leaf for greater protection, folded more loosely around itself one of the leaves of the plant, taking care, however, to encase the leaf-stalk and the twig with a thick and strong web of silk, so far from depending on the strength of the stalk, which is now quite brittle. The strongest fingers cannot break it, and the cocoon can only be got off by slipping it up and off the twig. There they hang themselves secure for the winter, proof against cold and the birds, ready to become butterflies when new leaves push forth.[1]

The snow everywhere was covered with snow-fleas like pepper. When you hold a mass in your hand, they skip and are gone before you know it. They are so small that they go through and through the new snow. Sometimes when collected they look like some powder which the hunter has spilled in the path.

Dec. 17. Flint's Pond apparently froze completely over last night. It is about two inches thick. Walden is only slightly skimmed over a rod from the shore. I noticed, where it had been frozen for some time near the shore of Flint's Pond and the ice was thicker and

[1] [Evidently cocoons of the Promethea moth.]

whiter, there were handsome spider-shaped dark places, where the under ice had melted, and the water had worn it running through, — a handsome figure on the icy carpet.

I noticed when the snow first came that the days were very sensibly lengthened by the light being reflected from the snow. Any work which required light could be pursued about half an hour longer. So that we may well pray that the ground may not be laid bare by a thaw in these short winter days.

Dec. 19. Yesterday I tracked a partridge in the new-fallen snow, till I came to where she took to flight, and I could track her no further. I see where the snowbirds have picked the seeds of the Roman wormwood and other weeds and have covered the snow with the shells and husks. The smilax berries are as plump as ever. The catkins of the alders are as tender and fresh-looking as ripe mulberries. The dried choke-cherries so abundant in the swamp are now quite sweet. The witch-hazel is covered with fruit and drops over gracefully like a willow, the yellow foundation of its flowers still remaining. I find the sweet-gale (*Myrica*) by the river also. The wild apples are frozen as hard as stones, and rattle in my pockets, but I find that they soon thaw when I get to my chamber and yield a sweet cider.[1] I am astonished that the animals make no more use of them.

Dec. 22. The apples are now thawed. This is their first thawing. Those which a month ago were sour,

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 320; Riv. 393.]

crabbed, and uneatable are now filled with a rich, sweet cider which I am better acquainted with than with wine. And others, which have more substance, are a sweet and luscious food, — in my opinion of more worth than the pineapples which are imported from the torrid zone. Those which a month ago I tasted and repented of it, which the farmer willingly left on the tree, I am now glad to find have the property of hanging on like the leaves of the shrub oak. It is a way to keep cider sweet without boiling. Let the frost come to freeze them first solid as stones, and then the sun or a warm winter day — for it takes but little heat — to thaw them, and they will seem to have borrowed a flavor from heaven through the medium of the air in which they hang. I find when I get home that they have thawed in my pocket and the ice is turned to cider. But I suspect that after the second freezing and thawing they will not be so good. I bend to drink the cup and save my lappets. What are the half-ripe fruits of the torrid south, to this fruit matured by the cold of the frigid north. There are those crabbed apples with which I cheated my companion, and kept a smooth face to tempt him to eat. Now we both greedily fill our pockets with them, and grow more social with their wine. Was there one that hung so high and sheltered by the tangled branches that our sticks could not dislodge it? It is a fruit never brought to market that I am aware of, — quite distinct from the apple of the markets, as from dried apple and cider. It is not every winter that produces it in perfection.[1]

In winter I can explore the swamps and ponds. It is

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 319, 320; Riv. 392–394.]

a dark-aired winter day, yet I see the summer plants still peering above the snow. There are but few tracks in all this snow. It is the Yellow Knife River or the Saskatchewan. The large leafy lichens on the white pines, especially on the outside of the wood, look almost a golden yellow in the light reflected from the snow, while deeper in the wood they are ash-colored. In the swamps the dry, yellowish-colored fruit of the poison dogwood hangs like jewelry on long, drooping stems. It is pleasant to meet it, it has so much character relatively to man. Here is a stump on which a squirrel has sat and stripped the pine cones of a neighboring tree. Their cores and scales lie all around. He knew that they contained an almond [1] before the naturalist did. He has long been a close observer of Nature; opens her caskets. I see more tracks in the swamps than elsewhere.

Dec. 23. Here is an old-fashioned snow-storm. There is not much passing on railroads. The engineer says it is three feet deep above. Walden is frozen, one third of it, though I thought it was all frozen as I stood on the shore on one side only. There is no track on the Walden road. A traveller might cross it in the woods and not be sure it was a road. As I pass the farmers' houses I observe the cop [*sic*] of the sled propped up with a stick to prevent its freezing into the snow. The needles of the pines are drooping like cockerels' feathers after a rain, and frozen together by the sleety snow. The pitch pines now bear their snowy fruit.

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. i, p. 338.]

I can discern a faint foot or sled path sooner when the ground is covered with snow than when it is bare. The depression caused by the feet or the wheels is more obvious; perhaps the light and shade betray it, but I think it is mainly because the grass and weeds rise above it on each side and leave it blank, and a blank space of snow contrasts more strongly with the woods or grass than bare or beaten ground.

Even the surface of the snow is wont to be in waves like billows of the ocean.

Dec. 24. In walking across the Great Meadows to-day on the snow-crust, I noticed that the fine, dry snow which was blown over the surface of the frozen field, when I [looked] westward over it or toward the sun, looked precisely like steam curling up from its surface, as sometimes from a wet roof when the sun comes out after a rain.

The snow catches only in the hollows and against the reeds and grass, and never rests there, but when it has formed a broad and shallow drift or a long and narrow one like a winrow on the ice, it blows away again from one extremity, and leaves often a thin, tongue-like projection at one end, some inches above the firm crust.

I observe that there are many dead pine-needles sprinkled over the snow, which had not fallen before.

Saw a shrike pecking to pieces a small bird, apparently a snowbird. At length he took him up in his bill, almost half as big as himself, and flew slowly off with his prey dangling from his beak. I find that I had not

associated such actions with my idea of birds. It was not birdlike.

It is never so cold but it melts somewhere. Our mason well remarked that he had sometimes known it to be melting and freezing at the same time on a particular side of a house; while it was melting on the roof the icicles [were] forming under the eaves. It is always melting and freezing at the same time when icicles are formed.

Our thoughts are with those among the dead into whose sphere we are rising, or who are now rising into our own. Others we inevitably forget, though they be brothers and sisters. Thus the departed may be nearer to us than when they were present. At death our friends and relations either draw nearer to us and are found out, or depart further from us and are forgotten. Friends are as often brought nearer together as separated by death.

Dec. 26. Thursday. The pine woods seen from the hilltops, now that the ground is covered with snow, are not green but a dark brown, greenish-brown perhaps. You see dark patches of wood. There are still half a dozen fresh ripe red and glossy oak leaves left on the bush under the Cliffs.

Walden not yet more than half frozen over.

Dec. 30. In R. Gordon Cumming's "Hunter's Life in South Africa," [1] I find an account of the honey-bird,

[1] [*Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa*, 1850.]

which will lead a person to a wild bees' nest and, having got its share of the spoil, will sometimes lead to a second and third. (Vol. I, page 49.)

He saw dry sheep's dung burning, and after eighteen months it was burning still. One heap was said to have burned seven years. Remarkable for burning slowly. (Page 62.)

He came across a Boer who manufactured ashes by burning a particular bush and sold it to the richer Boers. (Page 71.)

He says that the oryx or gemsbok, a kind of antelope, never tastes water. Lives on the deserts. (Page 94.)

The Bushmen conceal water in ostrich eggs at regular intervals across the desert, and so perform long journeys over them safely. (Page 101.)

The hatching of ostrich eggs not left to heat of sun. (Page 105.) The natives empty them by a small aperture at one end, fill with water, and cork up the hole with grass. (Page 106.)

The Hottentots devoured the marrow of a koodoo raw as a matter of course.[1]

The Bechuanas use "the assagai," "a sort of light spear or javelin" with a shaft six feet long, which they will send through a man's body at a hundred yards. (Page 201.)

The Bakatlas smelt and work in iron quite well; make spears, battle-axes, knives, needles, etc., etc. (Page 207.)

The skin of the eland just killed, like that of most

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 275, 276.]

other antelopes, emits the most delicious perfume of trees and grass. (Page 218.) [1]

When waiting by night for elephants to approach a fountain, he "heard a low rumbling noise . . . , caused (as the Bechuanas affirmed) by the bowels of the elephants which were approaching the fountain." (Page 261.)

"A child can put a hundred of them [elephants] [2] to flight by passing at a quarter of a mile to windward." (Page 263.)

It is incredible how many "goodly" trees an elephant will destroy, sometimes wantonly. (265.)

An elephant's friend will protect its wounded companion at the risk of its own life. (268.)

The rhinoceros-birds stick their bills in the ear of the rhinoceros and wake him up when the hunter is approaching. They live on ticks and other parasitic insects on his body. He perfectly understands their warning. He has chased a rhinoceros many miles on horseback and fired many shots before he fell, and all the while the birds remained by him, perched on his back and sides, and as each bullet struck him they ascended about six feet into the air, uttering a cry of alarm, and then resumed their position. Sometimes they were swept off his back by branches of trees. When the rhinoceros was shot at midnight, they have remained by his body thinking him asleep, and on the hunter's approaching in the morning have tried to wake him up. (Page 293.)

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 276.]

[2] [Thoreau supplies the word.]

The Bechuanas make a pipe in a few moments by kneading moistened earth with their knuckles on a twig, until a hole is established, then one end of the aperture is enlarged with their fingers for a bowl. (Page 306.)

Dec. 31. I observe that in the cut by Walden Pond the sand and stones fall from the overhanging bank and rest on the snow below; and thus, perchance, the stratum deposited by the side of the road in the winter can permanently be distinguished from the summer one by some faint seam, to be referred to the peculiar conditions under which it was deposited.

The pond has been frozen over since I was there last.

Certain meadows, as Heywood's, contain warmer water than others and are slow to freeze. I do not remember to have crossed this with impunity in all places. The brook that issues from it is still open completely, though the thermometer was down to eight below zero this morning.

The blue jays evidently notify each other of the presence of an intruder, and will sometimes make a great chattering about it, and so communicate the alarm to other birds and to beasts.

III

JANUARY – APRIL, 1851

(ÆT. 33)

Jan. 2. Saw at Clinton last night a room at the gingham-mills which covers one and seven-eighths acres and contains 578 looms, not to speak of spindles, both throttle and mule. The rooms all together cover three acres. They were using between three and four hundred horse-power, and kept an engine of two hundred horse-power, with a wheel twenty-three feet in diameter and a band ready to supply deficiencies, which have not often occurred. Some portion of the machinery — I think it was where the cotton was broken up, lightened up, and mixed before being matted together — revolved eighteen hundred times in a minute.

I first saw the pattern room where patterns are made by a hand loom. There were two styles of warps ready for the woof or filling. The operator must count the threads of the woof, which in the mill is done by the machinery. It was the ancient art of weaving, the shuttle flying back and forth, putting in the filling. As long as the warp is the same, it is but one "style," so called.

The cotton should possess a long staple and be clean and free from seed. The Sea Island cotton has a long staple and is valuable for thread. Many bales are thoroughly mixed to make the goods of one quality. The cotton is then torn to pieces and thoroughly light-

ened up by cylinders armed with hooks and by fans; then spread, a certain weight on a square yard, and matted together, and torn up and matted together again two or three times over; then the matted cotton fed to a cylindrical card, a very thin web of it, which is gathered into a copper trough, making six (the six-card machines) flat, rope-like bands, which are united into one at the railway head and drawn. And this operation of uniting and drawing or stretching goes on from one machine to another until the thread is spun, which is then dyed (calico is printed after being woven), — having been wound off on to reels and so made into skeins, — dyed and dried by steam; then, by machinery, wound on to spools for the warp and the woof. From a great many spools the warp is drawn off over cylinders and different-colored threads properly mixed and arranged. Then the ends of the warp are drawn through the harness of the loom by hand. The operator knows the succession of red, blue, green, etc., threads, having the numbers given her, and draws them through the harness accordingly, keeping count. Then the woof is put in, or it is *woven!!* Then the inequalities or nubs are picked off by girls. If *they* discover any imperfection, they tag it, and if necessary the wages of the weaver are reduced. Now, I think, it is passed over a red-hot iron cylinder, and the fuzz singed off, then washed with wheels with cold water; then the water forced out by centrifugal force within horizontal wheels. Then it is starched, the ends stitched together by machinery; then stretched smooth, dried, and ironed by machinery; then measured, folded, and packed.

This the agent, Forbes, says is the best gingham-mill in this country. The goods are better than the imported. The English have even stolen their name Lancaster Mills, calling them "Lancasterian."

The machinery is some of it peculiar, part of the throttle spindles (?) for instance.

The coach-lace-mill, only place in this country where it is made by machinery; made of thread of different materials, as cotton, worsted, linen, as well as colors, the raised figure produced by needles inserted woof fashion. Well worth examining further. Also pantaloon stuffs made in same mill and dyed after being woven, the woolen not taking the same dye with the cotton; hence a slight parti-colored appearance. These goods are sheared, *i. e.* a part of the nap taken off, making them smoother. Pressed between pasteboards.

The Brussels carpets made at the carpet-factory said to be the best in the world. Made like coach lace, only wider.

Erastus (?) Bigelow inventor of what is new in the above machinery; and, with his brother and another, owner of the carpet-factory.

I am struck by the fact that no work has been shirked when a piece of cloth is produced. Every thread has been counted in the finest web; it has not been matted together. The operator has succeeded only by patience, perseverance, and fidelity.

The direction in which a railroad runs, though intersecting another at right angles, may cause that one will be blocked up with snow and the other be

comparatively open even for great distances, depending on the direction of prevailing winds and valleys. There are the Fitchburg and Nashua & Worcester.

Jan. 4. The longest silence is the most pertinent question most pertinently put. Emphatically silent. The most important question, whose answers concern us more than any, are never put in any other way.

It is difficult for two strangers, mutually well disposed, so truly to bear themselves toward each other that a feeling of falseness and hollowness shall not soon spring up between them. The least anxiety to behave truly vitiates the relation. I think of those to whom I am at the moment truly related, with a joy never expressed and never to be expressed, before I fall asleep at night, though I am hardly on speaking terms with them these years. When I think of it, I am truly related to them.

Jan. 5. The catkins of the alders are now frozen stiff!!

Almost all that my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad. If I repent of anything, it is of my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well? You may say the wisest thing you can, old man, — you who have lived seventy years, not without honor of a kind, — I hear an irresistible voice, the voice of my destiny, which invites me away from all that.[1]

Jan. 7. The snow is sixteen inches deep at least, but [it] is a mild and genial afternoon, as if it were the

[1] [*Walden*, p. 11; Riv. 19.]

beginning of a January thaw. Take away the snow and it would not be winter but like many days in the fall. The birds acknowledge the difference in the air; the jays are more noisy, and the chickadees are oftener heard.

Many herbs are not crushed by the snow.

I do not remember to have seen fleas except when the weather was mild and the snow damp.

I must live above all in the present.

Science does not embody all that men know, only what is for men of science. The woodman tells me how he caught trout in a box trap, how he made his trough for maple sap of pine logs, and the spouts of sumach or white ash, which have a large pith. He can relate his facts to human life.

The knowledge of an unlearned man is living and luxuriant like a forest, but covered with mosses and lichens and for the most part inaccessible and going to waste; the knowledge of the man of science is like timber collected in yards for public works, which still supports a green sprout here and there, but even this is liable to dry rot.

I felt my spirits rise when I had got off the road into the open fields, and the sky had a new appearance. I stepped along more buoyantly. There was a warm sunset over the wooded valleys, a yellowish tinge on the pines. Reddish dun-colored clouds like dusky flames stood over it. And then streaks of blue sky were seen here and there. The life, the joy, that is in blue sky after a storm! There is no account of the blue sky in

history. Before I walked in the ruts of travel; now I adventured. This evening a fog comes up from the south.

If I have any conversation with a scamp in my walk, my afternoon is wont to be spoiled.

The squirrels and apparently the rabbits have got all the frozen apples in the hollow behind Miles's. The rabbits appear to have devoured what the squirrels dropped and left. I see the tracks of both leading from the woods on all sides to the apple trees.

Jan. 8. The smilax (green-briar) berries still hang on like small grapes. The thorn of this vine is very perfect, like a straight dagger.

The light of the setting sun falling on the snow-banks to-day made them glow almost yellow.

The hills seen from Fair Haven Pond make a wholly new landscape; covered with snow and yellowish green or brown pines and shrub oaks, they look higher and more massive. Their white mantle relates them to the clouds in the horizon and to the sky. Perchance what is light-colored looks loftier than what is dark.

You might say of a very old and withered man or woman that they hung on like a shrub oak leaf, almost to a second spring. There was still a little life in the heel of the leaf-stalk.

Jan. 10. The snow shows how much of the mountains in the horizon are covered with forest. I can also see plainer as I stand on a hill what proportion of the township is in forest.

Got some excellent frozen-thawed apples off of Annursnack, soft and luscious as a custard and free from worms and rot. Saw a partridge budding, but they did not appear to have pecked the apples.

There was a remarkable sunset; a mother-of-pearl sky seen over the Price farm; some small clouds, as well as the edges of large ones, most brilliantly painted with mother-of-pearl tints through and through. I never saw the like before. Who can foretell the sunset, — what it will be?

The near and bare hills covered with snow look like mountains, but the mountains in the horizon do not look higher than hills.

I frequently see a hole in the snow where a partridge has squatted, the mark or form of her tail very distinct.

The chivalric and heroic spirit, which once belonged to the chevalier or rider only, seems now to reside in the walker. To represent the chivalric spirit we have no longer a knight, but a walker, errant.[1] I speak not of pedestrianism, or of walking a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours.

The Adam who daily takes a turn in his garden.

Methinks I would not accept of the gift of life, if I were required to spend as large a portion of it sitting foot up or with my legs crossed, as the shoemakers and tailors do. As well be tied neck and heels together and cast into the sea. Making acquaintance with my extremities.

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of taking walks daily, — not [to] exercise the legs or body merely, nor barely to

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 206; Riv. 253.]

recruit the spirits, but positively to exercise both body and spirit, and to succeed to the highest and worthiest ends by the abandonment of all specific ends, — who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering. And this word "saunter," by the way, is happily derived "from idle people who roved about the country [in the Middle Ages] [1] and asked charity under pretence of going *à la Sainte Terre*," to the Holy Land, till, perchance, the children exclaimed, "There goes a *Sainte-Terrer*," a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds.[2]

[Four pages missing.]

[Perhaps I am more] than usually jealous of my freedom. I feel that my connections with and obligations to society are at present very slight and transient. Those slight labors which afford me a livelihood, and by which I am serviceable to my contemporaries, are as yet a pleasure to me, and I am not often reminded that they are a necessity. So far I am successful, and only he is successful in his business who makes that pursuit which affords him the highest pleasure sustain him. But I foresee that if my wants should be much increased the labor required to supply them would become a drudgery. If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, neglecting my peculiar calling, there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage.[3]

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.] [2] [*Excursions*, p. 205; Riv. 251.]
[3] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 460, 461; *Misc.*, Riv. 260.]

F. Andrew Michaux says that "the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe: in the United States there are more than one hundred and forty species that exceed thirty feet in height; in France there are but thirty that attain this size, of which eighteen enter into the composition of the forests, and seven only are employed in building." [1]

The perfect resemblance of the chestnut, beech, and hornbeam in Europe and the United States rendered a separate figure unnecessary.

He says the white oak "is the only oak on which a few of the dried leaves persist till the circulation is renewed in the spring."

Had often heard his father say that "the fruit of the common European walnut, in its natural state, is harder than that of the American species just mentioned [the pacane-nut hickory] [2] and inferior to it in size and quality."

The arts teach us a thousand lessons. Not a yard of cloth can be woven without the most thorough fidelity in the weaver. The ship must be made *absolutely* tight before it is launched.

It is an important difference between two characters that the one is satisfied with a happy but level success but the other as constantly elevates his aim. Though my life is low, if my spirit looks upward habitually at an elevated angle, it is as it were redeemed. When the

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 220; Riv. 269, 270.]

[2] [The bracketed words are Thoreau's.]

desire to be better than we are is really sincere we are instantly elevated, and so far better already.

I lose my friends, of course, as much by my own ill treatment and ill valuing of them, prophaning of them, cheapening of them, as by their cheapening of themselves, till at last, when I am prepared to [do] them justice, I am permitted to deal only with the memories of themselves, their ideals still surviving in me, no longer with their actual selves. We exclude ourselves, as the child said of the stream in which he bathed head or foot. (*Vide* Confucius.)

It is something to know when you are addressed by Divinity and not by a common traveller. I went down cellar just now to get an armful of wood and, passing the brick piers with my wood and candle, I heard, methought, a commonplace suggestion, but when, as it were by accident, I reverently attended to the hint, I found that it was the voice of a god who had followed me down cellar to speak to me. How many communications may we not lose through inattention!

I would fain keep a journal which should contain those thoughts and impressions which I am most liable to forget that I have had; which would have in one sense the greatest remoteness, in another, the greatest nearness to me.

'T is healthy to be sick sometimes.

I do not know but the reason why I love some Latin verses more than whole English poems is simply in the elegant terseness and conciseness of the language,

an advantage which the individual appears to have shared with his nation.

When we can no longer ramble in the fields of nature, we ramble in the fields of thought and literature. The old become readers. Our heads retain their strength when our legs have become weak.

English literature from the days of the minstrels to the Lake Poets, Chaucer and Spenser and Shakspeare and Milton included, breathes no quite fresh and, in this sense, wild strain. It is an essentially tame and civilized literature, reflecting Greece and Rome. Her wilderness is a greenwood, her wild man a Robin Hood. There is plenty of genial love of nature in her poets, but [not so much of nature herself.] Her chronicles inform us when her wild animals, but not when the wild man in her, became extinct.[1] There was need of America. I cannot think of any poetry which adequately expresses this yearning for the Wild, the *wilde*.[2]

Ovid says: —

> Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,
> Occuluitque caput, quod adhuc latet.
> (Nilus, terrified, fled to the extremity of the globe,
> And hid his head, which is still concealed.)

And we moderns must repeat, "*Quod adhuc latet.*"
Phaëton's epitaph: —

> Hic situs est Phaëton, currûs auriga paterni;
> Quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 231; Riv. 283, 284.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 232; Riv. 284.]

His sister Lampetie *subitâ radice retenta est.* All the sisters were changed to trees while they were in vain beseeching their mother not to break their branches. *Cortex in verba novissima venit.*

His brother Cycnus, lamenting the death of Phaëton killed by Jove's lightning, and the metamorphosis of his sisters, was changed into a swan, —

nec se coeloque, Jovique
Credit, ut injustè missi memor ignis ab illo.

(Nor trusts himself to the heavens
Nor to Jove, as if remembering the fire unjustly sent by him),

i. e. against Phaëton. (Reason why the swan does not fly.)

. . . precibusque minas regaliter addit.
([Jove] royally adds threats to prayers.)

Callisto *miles erat Phoebes, i. e.* a huntress.

. . (neque enim coelestia tingi
Ora decet lachrymis).

(For it is not becoming that the faces of the celestials be tinged with tears, — keep a stiff upper lip.)

How much more fertile a nature has Grecian mythology its root in than English literature! The nature which inspired mythology still flourishes. Mythology is the crop which the Old World bore before its soil was exhausted. The West is preparing to add its fables to those of the East.[1] A more fertile nature than the Mississippi Valley.

None of your four-hour nights for me. The wise man

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 232, 233; Riv. 285.]

will take a fool's allowance. The corn would not come to much if the nights were but four hours long.

The soil in which those fables grew is deep and inexhaustible.

Lead cast by the Balearian sling: —

> Volat illud, et incandescit eundo;
> Et, quos non habuit, sub nubibus invenit ignes.
> (That flies and grows hot with going,
> And fires which it had not finds amid the clouds.)

I went some months ago to see a panorama of the Rhine. It was like a dream of the Middle Ages. I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination, under bridges built by the Romans and repaired by later heroes, past cities and castles whose very names were music to me, — made my ears tingle, — and each of which was the subject of a legend. There seemed to come up from its waters and its vine-clad hills and valleys a hushed music as of crusaders departing for the Holy Land. There were Ehrenbreitstein and Rolandseck and Coblentz, which I knew only in history. I floated along through the moonlight of history under the spell of enchantment. It was as if I remembered a glorious dream, — as if I had been transported to a heroic age and breathed an atmosphere of chivalry. Those times appeared far more poetic and heroic than these.

Soon after I went to see the panorama of the Mississippi, and as I fitly worked my way upward in the light of to-day, and saw the steamboats wooding up, and looked up the Ohio and the Missouri, and saw its

unpeopled cliffs, and counted the rising cities,[1] and saw the Indians removing west across the stream, and heard the legends of Dubuque and of Wenona's Cliff, — still thinking more of the future than of the past or present, — I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a different kind.[2]

The Old World, with its vast deserts and its arid and elevated steppes and table-lands, contrasted with the New World with its humid and fertile valleys and savannas and prairies and its boundless primitive forests, is like the exhausted Indian corn lands contrasted with the peat meadows. America requires some of the sand of the Old World to be carted on to her rich but as yet unassimilated meadows.

Guyot says, "The Baltic Sea has a depth of only 120 feet between the coasts of Germany and those of Sweden" (page 82). "The Adriatic, between Venice and Trieste, has a depth of only 130 feet." "Between France and England, the greatest depth does not exceed 300 feet." The most extensive forest, "the most gigantic wilderness," on the earth is in the basin of the Amazon, and extends almost unbroken more than fifteen hundred miles. South America the kingdom of palms; nowhere a greater number of species. "This is a sign of the preponderating development of leaves over every other part of the vegetable growth; of that expansion of foliage, of that *leafiness*, peculiar to warm and moist climates.

[1] The fresh ruins of Nauvoo, the bright brick towns. Davenport?

[2] [*Excursions*, pp. 223, 224; Riv. 274.]

America has no plants with slender, shrunken leaves, like those of Africa and New Holland. The Ericas, or heather, so common, so varied, so characteristic of the flora of the Cape of Good Hope, is a form unknown to the New World. There is nothing resembling those Metrosideri of Africa, those dry Myrtles (Eucalyptus) and willow-leaved acacias, whose flowers shine with the liveliest colors, but their narrow foliage, turned edgewise to the vertical sun, casts no shadow." [1]

The white man derives his nourishment from the earth, — from the roots and grains, the potato and wheat and corn and rice and sugar, which often grow in fertile and pestilential river bottoms fatal to the life of the cultivator. The Indian has but a slender hold on the earth. He derives his nourishment in great part but indirectly from her, through the animals he hunts.[2]

"Compared with the Old World, the New World is the humid side of our planet, the *oceanic, vegetative* world, the passive element awaiting the excitement of a livelier impulse from without." [3]

"For the American, this task is to work the virgin soil."

"Agriculture here already assumes proportions unknown everywhere else." [4]

[1] [Arnold Guyot, *The Earth and Man.* Translated by C. C. Felton.]

[2] My own.

[3] [Guyot, *op. cit.*]

[4] [Guyot, *op. cit.*]

Feb. 9. The last half of January was warm and thawy. The swift streams were open, and the muskrats were seen swimming and diving and bringing up clams, leaving their shells on the ice. We had now forgotten summer and autumn, but had already begun to anticipate spring. Fishermen improved the warmer weather to fish for pickerel through the ice. Before it was only the autumn landscape with a thin layer of snow upon it; we saw the withered flowers through it; but now we do not think of autumn when we look on this snow. That earth is effectually buried. It is midwinter. Within a few days the cold has set in stronger than ever, though the days are much longer now. Now I travel across the fields on the crust which has frozen since the January thaw, and I can cross the river in most places. It is easier to get about the country than at any other season, — easier than in summer, because the rivers and meadows are frozen and there is no high grass or other crops to be avoided; easier than in December before the crust was frozen.

Sir John Mandeville says, "In fro what partie of the earth that men dwell, outher aboven or benethen, it seemeth always to hem that dwellen there, that they gon more right than any other folk." Again, "And yee shulle undirstonde, that of all theise contrees, and of all theise yles, and of all the dyverse folk, that I have spoken of before, and of dyverse laws and of dyverse beleeves that thei have, yit is there non of hem alle, but that thei have sum resoun within hem and understondinge, but gif it be the fewere."

I have heard that there is a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It is said that knowledge is power and the like. Methinks there is equal need of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Ignorance, for what is most of our boasted so-called knowledge but a conceit that we know something, which robs us of the advantages of our actual ignorance.[1]

For a man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful but beautiful, while his knowledge is oftentimes worse than useless, beside being ugly.[2] In reference to important things, whose knowledge amounts to more than a consciousness of his ignorance? Yet what more refreshing and inspiring knowledge than this?

How often are we wise as serpents without being harmless as doves!

Donne says, "Who are a little wise the best fools be." Cudworth says, "We have all of us by nature μάντευμά τε (as both Plato and Aristotle call it), a certain divination, presage and parturient vaticination in our minds, of some higher good and perfection than either power or knowledge." Aristotle himself declares, that there is λόγου τι κρεῖττον, which is λόγου ἀρχή, — (something better than reason and knowledge, which is the principle and original of all). Lavater says, "Who finds the clearest not clear, thinks the darkest not obscure."

My desire for knowledge is intermittent; but my desire to commune with the spirit of the universe, to

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 239; Riv. 293.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 240; Riv. 294.]

Midwinter

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[1] [Excursions, p. 239; Riv. 295.]
[2] [Excursions, p. 240; Riv. 296.]

be intoxicated even with the fumes, call it, of that divine nectar, to bear my head through atmospheres and over heights unknown to my feet, is perennial and constant.[1]

It is remarkable how few events or crises there are in our minds' histories, how little *exercised* we have been in our minds, how few experiences we have had.[2]

[Four pages missing.]

The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a mere fable; the founders of every state which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar source. It is because the children of the empire were not suckled by wolves that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the northern forests who were.[3]

America is the she wolf to-day, and the children of exhausted Europe exposed on her uninhabited and savage shores are the Romulus and Remus who, having derived new life and vigor from her breast, have founded a new Rome in the West.

It is remarkable how few passages, comparatively speaking, there are in the best literature of the day which betray any intimacy with Nature.

It is apparent enough to me that only one or two of my townsmen or acquaintances — not more than one in many thousand men, indeed — feel or at least obey any strong attraction drawing them toward the forest or to Nature, but all, almost without exception, gravitate

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 240; Riv. 294.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 241; Riv. 295.]
[3] [*Excursions*, pp. 224, 225; Riv. 275.]

exclusively toward men, or society.[1] The young men of Concord and in other towns do not walk in the woods, but congregate in shops and offices. They suck one another. Their strongest attraction is toward the mill-dam. A thousand assemble about the fountain in the public square, — the town pump, — be it full or dry, clear or turbid, every morning, but not one in a thousand is in the meanwhile drinking at that fountain's head. It is hard for the young, aye, and the old, man in the outskirts to keep away from the mill-dam a whole day; but he will find some excuse, as an ounce of cloves that might be wanted, or a *New England Farmer* still in the office, to tackle up the horse, or even go afoot, but he will go at some rate. This is not bad comparatively; this is because he cannot do better. In spite of his hoeing and chopping, he is unexpressed and undeveloped.

I do not know where to find in any literature, whether ancient or modern, any adequate account of that Nature with which I am acquainted. Mythology comes nearest to it of any.[2]

The actual life of men is not without a dramatic interest at least to the thinker. It is not always and everywhere prosaic. Seventy thousand pilgrims proceed annually to Mecca from the various nations of Islam. But this is not so significant as the far simpler and more unpretending pilgrimage to the shrines of some obscure individual, which yet makes no bustle in the world.

I believe that Adam in paradise was not so favorably situated on the whole as is the backwoodsman

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 241; Riv. 296.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 232; Riv. 284, 285.]

in America.[1] You all know how miserably the former turned out, — or was turned out, — but there is some consolation at least in the fact that it yet remains to be seen how the western Adam in the wilderness will turn out.

In Adam's fall
We sinned all.
In the new Adam's rise
We shall all reach the skies.

An infusion of hemlock in our tea, if we must drink tea, — not the poison hemlock, but the hemlock spruce, I mean,[2] — or perchance the Arbor-Vitæ, the tree of life, — is what we want.

Feb. 12. *Wednesday.* A beautiful day, with but little snow or ice on the ground. Though the air is sharp, as the earth is half bare the hens have strayed to some distance from the barns. The hens, standing around their lord and pluming themselves and still fretting a little, strive to fetch the year about.

A thaw has nearly washed away the snow and raised the river and the brooks and flooded the meadows, covering the old ice, which is still fast to the bottom.

I find that it is an excellent walk for variety and novelty and wildness, to keep round the edge of the meadow, — the ice not being strong enough to bear and transparent as water, — on the bare ground or snow, just between the highest water mark and the present water line, — a narrow, meandering walk, rich in unex-

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 223; Riv. 273.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 275.]

pected views and objects. The line of rubbish which marks the higher tides — withered flags and reeds and twigs and cranberries — is to my eyes a very agreeable and significant line, which Nature traces along the edge of the meadows. It is a strongly marked, enduring natural line, which in summer reminds me that the water has once stood over where I walk. Sometimes the grooved trees tell the same tale. The wrecks of the meadow, which fill a thousand coves, and tell a thousand tales to those who can read them. Our prairial, mediterranean shore. The gentle rise of water around the trees in the meadow, where oaks and maples stand far out in the sea, and young elms sometimes are seen standing close around some rock which lifts its head above the water, as if protecting it, preventing it from being washed away, though in truth they owe their origin and preservation to it. It first invited and detained their seed, and now preserves the soil in which they grow. A pleasant reminiscence of the rise of waters, to go up one side of the river and down the other, following this way, which meanders so much more than the river itself. If you cannot go on the ice, you are then gently compelled to take this course, which is on the whole more beautiful, — to follow the sinuosities of the meadow. Between the highest water mark and the present water line is a space generally from a few feet to a few rods in width. When the water comes over the road, then my spirits rise, — when the fences are carried away. A prairial walk. Saw a caterpillar crawling about on the snow.

The earth is so bare that it makes an impression on me as if it were catching cold.

I saw to-day something new to me as I walked along the edge of the meadow. Every half-mile or so along the channel of the river I saw at a distance where apparently the ice had been broken up while freezing by the pressure of other ice, — thin cakes of ice forced up on their edges and reflecting the sun like so many mirrors, whole fleets of shining sails, giving a very lively appearance to the river, — where for a dozen rods the flakes of ice stood on their edges, like a fleet beating up-stream against the sun, a fleet of ice-boats.

It is remarkable that the cracks in the ice on the meadows sometimes may be traced a dozen rods from the water through the snow in the neighboring fields.

It is only necessary that man should start a fence that Nature should carry it on and complete it. The farmer cannot plow quite up to the rails or wall which he himself has placed, and hence it often becomes a hedgerow and sometimes a coppice.

I found to-day apples still green under the snow, and others frozen and thawed, sweeter far than when sound, — a sugary sweetness.[1]

There is something more than association at the bottom of the excitement which the roar of a cataract produces. It is allied to the circulation in our veins. We have a waterfall which corresponds even to Niagara somewhere within us.[2] It is astonishing what a rush and tumult a slight inclination will produce in a swollen brook. How it proclaims its glee, its boisterousness, rushing headlong in its prodigal course as if it would exhaust itself in half an hour! How it spends itself! I

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 319; Riv. 392.] [2] [See p. 300.]

would say to the orator and poet, Flow freely and *lavishly* as a brook that is full, — without stint. Perchance I have stumbled upon the origin of the word "lavish." It does not hesitate to tumble down the steepest precipice and roar or tinkle as it goes, for fear it will exhaust its fountain. The impetuosity of descending water even by the slightest inclination! It seems to flow with ever increasing rapidity.

It is difficult to believe what philosophers assert, that it is merely a difference in the form of the elementary particles — as whether they are square or globular — which makes the difference between the steadfast, everlasting, and reposing hillside and the impetuous torrent which tumbles down it.

It is refreshing to walk over sprout-lands, where oak and chestnut sprouts are mounting swiftly up again into the sky, and already perchance their sere leaves begin to rustle in the breeze and reflect the light on the hillsides.

> "Heroic underwoods that take the air
> With freedom, nor respect their parents' death." [1]

I trust that the walkers of the present day are conscious of the blessings which they enjoy in the comparative freedom with which they can ramble over the country and enjoy the landscape, anticipating with compassion that future day when possibly it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, where only a few may enjoy the narrow and exclusive pleasure which is compatible with ownership, — when walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to

[1] [W. E. Channing, "Walden Spring."]

mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds, when fences shall be multiplied and man traps and other engines invented to confine men to the public road. I am thankful that we have yet so much room in America.[1]

Feb. 13. Skated to Sudbury. A beautiful, summer-like day. The meadows were frozen just enough to bear. Examined now the fleets of ice-flakes close at hand. They are a very singular and interesting phenomenon, which I do not remember to have seen. I should say that when the water was frozen about as thick as pasteboard, a violent gust had here and there broken it up, and while the wind and waves held it up on its edge, the increasing cold froze it in firmly. So it seemed, for the flakes were for the most part turned one way; *i. e.* standing on one side, you saw only their edges, on another — the northeast or southwest — their sides. They were for the most part of a triangular form, like a shoulder[*sic*]-of-mutton sail, slightly scalloped, like

shells. They looked like a fleet of a thousand mackerel-fishers under a press of sail careering before a smacking breeze. Sometimes the sun and wind had reduced them to the thinness of writing-paper, and they fluttered and rustled and tinkled merrily. I skated through them and strewed their wrecks around. They appear to have been elevated expressly to reflect the sun like mirrors, to adorn the river and attract the eye of the skater. Who will say

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 216; Riv. 264, 265.]

that their principal end is not answered when they excite the admiration of the skater? Every half-mile or mile, as you skate up the river, you see these crystal fleets. Nature is a great imitator and loves to repeat herself. She wastes her wonders on the town. It impresses me as one superiority in her art, if art it may be called, that she does not require that man appreciate her, takes no steps to attract his attention.

The trouble is in getting on and off the ice; when you are once on you can go well enough. It melts round the edges.

Again I saw to-day, half a mile off in Sudbury, a sandy spot on the top of a hill, where I prophesied that I should find traces of the Indians. When within a dozen rods, I distinguished the foundation of a lodge, and merely passing over it, I saw many fragments of the arrowhead stone. I have frequently distinguished these localities half a mile [off], gone forward, and picked up arrowheads.

Saw in a warm, muddy brook in Sudbury, quite open and exposed, the skunk-cabbage spathes above water. The tops of the spathes were frost-bitten, but the fruit [*sic*] sound. There was one partly expanded. The first flower of the season; for it is a flower. I doubt if there is [a] month without its flower. Examined by the botany all its parts, — the first flower I have seen. The *Ictodes fœtidus*.

Also mosses, mingled red and green. The red will pass for the blossom.

As for antiquities, one of our old deserted country roads, marked only by the parallel fences and cellar-hole

with its bricks where the last inhabitant died, the victim of intemperance, fifty years ago, with its bare and exhausted fields stretching around, suggests to me an antiquity greater and more remote from the America of the newspapers than the tombs of Etruria. I insert the rise and fall of Rome in the interval. This is the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

It is important to observe not only the subject of our pure and unalloyed joys, but also the secret of any dissatisfaction one may feel.

In society, in the best institutions of men, I remark a certain precocity. When we should be growing children, we are already little men. Infants as we are, we make haste to be weaned from our great mother's breast, and cultivate our parts by intercourse with one another.

I have not much faith in the method of restoring impoverished soils which relies on manuring mainly and does not add some virgin soil or muck.

Many a poor, sore-eyed student that I have heard of would grow faster, both intellectually and physically, if, instead of sitting up so very late to study, he honestly slumbered a fool's allowance.[1]

I would not have every man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated. Some must be preparing a mould by the annual decay of the forests which they sustain.[2]

Saw half a dozen cows let out and standing about in a retired meadow as in a cow-yard.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 238; Riv. 291.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 238; Riv. 292.]

Feb. 14. Consider the farmer, who is commonly regarded as the healthiest man. He may be the toughest, but he is not the healthiest. He has lost his elasticity; he can neither run nor jump. Health is the free use and command of all our faculties, and equal development. His is the health of the ox, an overworked buffalo. His joints are stiff. The resemblance is true even in particulars. He is cast away in a pair of cowhide boots, and travels at an ox's pace. Indeed, in some places he puts his foot into the skin of an ox's shin. It would do him good to be thoroughly shampooed to make him supple. His health is an insensibility to all influence. But only the healthiest man in the world is sensible to the finest influence; he who is affected by more or less of electricity in the air.

We shall see but little way if we require to understand what we see. How few things can a man measure with the tape of his understanding! How many greater things might he be seeing in the meanwhile!

One afternoon in the fall, November 21st, I saw Fair Haven Pond with its island and meadow; between the island and the shore, a strip of perfectly smooth water in the lee of the island; and two hawks sailing over it; and something more I saw which cannot easily be described, which made me say to myself that the landscape could not be improved. I did not see how it could be improved. Yet I do not know what these things can be; I begin to see such objects only when I leave off understanding them, and afterwards remember that I did not appreciate them before. But I get no further than this. How adapted these forms and colors to our

eyes, a meadow and its islands! What are these things? Yet the hawks and the ducks keep so aloof, and nature is so reserved! We are made to love the river and the meadow, as the wind to ripple the water.[1]

There is a difference between eating for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course, and herein perchance have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. The eater of meat must come to this. This is better than stall-fed cattle and slaughter-house pork. Possibly they derive a certain wild-animal vigor therefrom which the most artfully cooked meats do not furnish.[2]

We learn by the January thaw that the winter is intermittent and are reminded of other seasons. The back of the winter is broken.

Feb. 15. Fatal is the discovery that our friend is fallible, that he has prejudices. He is, then, only prejudiced in our favor. What is the value of his esteem who does not justly esteem another?

Alas! Alas! when my friend begins to deal in confessions, breaks silence, makes a theme of friendship (which then is always something past), and descends to merely human relations! As long as there is a spark of love remaining, cherish that alone. Only *that* can be kindled into a flame. I thought that friendship, that love was still possible between [us]. I thought that we had not withdrawn very far asunder. But now that my friend rashly, thoughtlessly, profanely speaks, *recogniz-*

[1] [See p. 107.] [2] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 275, 276.]

ing the distance between us, that distance seems infinitely increased.

Of our friends we do not incline to speak, to complain, to others; we would not disturb the foundations of confidence that may still be.

Why should we not still continue to live with the intensity and rapidity of infants? Is not the world, are not the heavens, as unfathomed as ever? Have we exhausted any joy, any sentiment?

The author of Festus well exclaims: —

> "Could we but think with the intensity
> We love with, we might do great things, I think."

Feb. 16. Do we call this the land of the free? What is it to be free from King George the Fourth and continue the slaves of prejudice? What is it [to] be born free and equal, and not to live? What is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? Is it a freedom to be slaves or a freedom to be free, of which we boast? We are a nation of politicians, concerned about the outsides of freedom, the means and outmost defenses of freedom. It is our children's children who may perchance be essentially free. We tax ourselves unjustly. There is a part of us which is not represented. It is taxation without representation. We quarter troops upon ourselves. In respect to virtue or true manhood, we are essentially provincial, not metropolitan, — mere Jonathans. We are provincial, because we do not find at home our standards; because

we do not worship truth but the reflection of truth; because we are absorbed in and narrowed by trade and commerce and agriculture, which are but means and not the end. We are essentially provincial, I say, and so is the English Parliament. Mere country bumpkins they betray themselves, when any more important question arises for them to settle. Their natures are subdued to what they work in!

The finest manners in the world are awkwardness and fatuity when contrasted with a finer intelligence. They appear but as the fashions of past days, — mere courtliness, small-clothes, and knee-buckles, — have the vice of getting out of date; an attitude merely. The vice of manners is that they are continually deserted by the character; they are cast-off clothes or shells, claiming the respect of the living creature. You are presented with the shells instead of the meat, and it is no excuse generally that, in the case of some fish, the shells are of more worth than the meat. The man who thrusts his manners upon me does as if he were to insist on introducing me to his cabinet of curiosities, when I wish to see himself. Manners are conscious; character is unconscious.[1]

My neighbor does not recover from his formal bow so soon as I do from the pleasure of meeting him.

Feb. 18. *Tuesday.* Ground nearly bare of snow. Pleasant day with a strong south wind. Skated, though the ice was soft in spots. Saw the skunk-cabbage in flower. Gathered nuts and apples on the bare ground,

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 476–478; *Misc.*, Riv. 280–282.]

still sound and preserving their colors, red and green, many of them.

Yesterday the river was over the road by Hubbard's Bridge.

Surveyed White Pond yesterday, February 17th.

There is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting an honest living. Neither the New Testament nor Poor Richard speaks to our condition. I cannot think of a single page which entertains, much less answers, the questions which I put to myself on this subject. How to make the getting our living poetic! for if it is not poetic, it is not life but death that we get. Is it that men are too disgusted with their experience to speak of it? or that commonly they do not question the common modes? The most practically important of all questions, it seems to me, is how shall I get my living, and yet I find little or nothing said to the purpose in any book. Those who are living on the interest of money inherited, or dishonestly, *i. e.* by false methods, acquired, are of course incompetent to answer it. I consider that society with all its arts, has done nothing for us in this respect. One would think, from looking at literature, that this question had never disturbed a solitary individual's musings. Cold and hunger seem more friendly to my nature than those methods which men have adopted and advise to ward them off.[1] If it were not that I desire to do something here, — accomplish some work, — I should certainly prefer to suffer and die rather than be at the pains to get a living by the modes men propose.

[1] [*Cape Cod and Miscellanies*, p. 462; *Misc.*, Riv. 262.]

There may be an excess even of informing light.

Niepce, a Frenchman, announced that "no substance can be exposed to the sun's rays without undergoing a chemical change." Granite rocks and stone structures and statues of metal, etc., "are," says Robert Hunt, "all alike destructively acted upon during the hours of sunshine, and, but for provisions of nature no less wonderful, would soon perish under the delicate touch of the most subtile of the agencies of the universe." But Niepce showed, says Hunt, "that those bodies which underwent this change during daylight possessed the power of restoring themselves to their original conditions during the hours of night, when this excitement was no longer influencing them." So, in the case of the daguerreotype, "the picture which we receive to-night, unless we adopt some method of securing its permanency, fades away before the morning, and we try to restore it in vain." (Infers) "the hours of darkness are as necessary to the inorganic creation as we know night and sleep are to the organic kingdom." Such is the influence of "actinism," that power in the sun's rays which produces a chemical effect.[1]

Feb. 25. A very windy day. A slight snow which fell last night was melted at noon. A strong, gusty wind; the waves on the meadows make a fine show. I saw at Hubbard's Bridge that all the ice had been blown up-stream from the meadows, and was collected over the channel against the bridge in large

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 238; Riv. 292.]

cakes. These were covered and intermingled with a remarkable quantity of the meadow's crust. There was no ice to be seen up-stream and no more down-stream.

The meadows have been flooded for a fortnight, and this water has been frozen barely thick enough to bear once only. The old ice on the meadows was covered several feet deep. I observed from the bridge, a few rods off northward, what looked like an island directly over the channel. It was the crust of the meadow afloat. I reached [it] with a little risk and found it to be four rods long by one broad, — the surface of the meadow with cranberry vines, etc., all connected and in their natural position, and no ice visible but around its edges. It appeared to be the frozen crust (which was separated from the unfrozen soil as ice is from the water beneath), buoyed up (?), perchance, by the ice around its edges frozen to the stubble. Was there any pure ice under it? Had there been any above it? Will frozen meadow float? Had ice which originally supported it from above melted except about the edges? When the ice melts or the soil thaws, of course it falls to the bottom, wherever it may be. Here is another agent employed in the distribution of plants. I have seen where a smooth shore which I frequented for bathing was in one season strewn with these hummocks, bearing the button-bush with them, which have now changed the character of the shore. There were many rushes and lily-pad stems on the ice. Had the ice formed about them as they grew, broken them off when it floated away, and so they were strewn about on it?

Feb. 26. *Wednesday.* Examined the floating meadow again to-day. It is more than a foot thick, the under part much mixed with ice, — ice and muck. It appeared to me that the meadow surface had been heaved by the frost, and then the water had run down and under it, and finally, when the ice rose, lifted it up, wherever there was ice enough mixed with it to float it. I saw large cakes of ice with other large cakes, the latter as big as a table, on top of them. Probably the former rose while the latter were already floating about. The plants scattered about were bulrushes and lily-pad stems.

Saw five red-wings and a song sparrow(?) this afternoon.

Feb. 27. Saw to-day on Pine Hill behind Mr. Joseph Merriam's house a Norway pine, the first I have seen in Concord. Mr. Gleason pointed it out to me as a singular pine which he did not know the name of. It was a very handsome tree, about twenty-five feet high. E. Wood thinks that he has lost the surface of two acres of his meadow by the ice. Got fifteen cartloads out of a hummock left on another meadow. Blue-joint was introduced into the first meadow where it did not grow before.

Of two men, one of whom knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, and the other really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all, — what great advantage has the latter over the former? which is the

best to deal with? I do not know that knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise, or a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we had called knowledge before; an indefinite sense of the grandeur and glory of the universe. It is the lighting up of the mist by the sun. But man cannot be said to know in any higher sense, [any more] than he can look serenely and with impunity in the face of the sun.[1]

A culture which imports much muck from the meadows and deepens the soil, not that which trusts to heating manures and improved agricultural implements only.

How, when a man purchases a thing, he is determined to get and get hold of it, using how many expletives and how long a string of synonymous or similar terms signifying possession, in the legal process! What's mine's my own. An old deed of a small piece of swamp land, which I have lately surveyed at the risk of being mired past recovery, says that "the said Spaulding his Heirs and Assigns, shall and may from this (?) time, and at all times forever hereafter, by force and virtue of these presents, lawfully, peaceably and quietly have, hold, use, occupy, possess and enjoy the said swamp," etc.

Magnetic iron, being anciently found in *Magnesia*, — hence *magnes*, or magnet, — employed by Pliny and others. Chinese appear to have discovered the magnet very early, A. D. 121 and before (?); used by them to

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 240; Riv. 294.]

steer ships in 419; mentioned by an Icelander, 1068; in a French poem, 1181; in Torfæus' History of Norway, 1266. Used by De Gama in 1427. Leading stone, hence loadstone.

The peroxide of hydrogen, or ozone, at first thought to be a chemical curiosity merely, is found to be very generally diffused through nature.

The following bears on the floating ice which has risen from the bottom of the meadows. Robert Hunt says: "Water conducts heat downward but very slowly; a mass of ice will remain undissolved but a few inches under water on the surface of which ether or any other inflammable body is burning. If ice swam beneath the surface, the summer sun would scarcely have power to thaw it; and thus our lakes and seas would be gradually converted into solid masses."

The figures of serpents, of griffins, flying dragons, and other embellishments of heraldry, the eastern idea of the world on an elephant, that on a tortoise, and that on a serpent again, etc., usually regarded as mythological in the common sense of that word, are thought by some to "indicate a faint and shadowy knowledge of a previous state of organic existence," such as geology partly reveals.

The fossil tortoise has been found in Asia large enough to support an elephant.

Ammonites, snake-stones, or petrified snakes have been found from of old, often decapitated.

In the northern part of Great Britain the fossil remains of encrinites are called "St. Cuthbert's beads." "Fiction dependent on truth."

Westward is heaven, or rather heavenward is the west. The way to heaven is from east to west round the earth. The sun leads and shows it. The stars, too, light it.

Nature and man; some prefer the one, others the other; but that is all *de gustibus*. It makes no odds at what well you drink, provided it be a well-head.

Walking in the woods, it may be, some afternoon, the shadow of the wings of a thought flits across the landscape of my mind, and I am reminded how little eventful are our lives. What have been all these wars and rumors of wars, and modern discoveries and improvements so-called? A mere irritation in the skin. But this shadow which is so soon past, and whose substance is not detected, suggests that there are events of importance whose interval is to us a true historic period.[1]

The lecturer is wont to describe the Nineteenth Century, the American [of] the last generation, in an off-hand and triumphant strain, wafting him to paradise, spreading his fame by steam and telegraph, recounting the number of wooden stopples he has whittled. But who does not perceive that this is not a sincere or pertinent account of any man's or nation's life? It is the hip-hip-hurrah and mutual-admiration-society style. Cars go by, and we know their substance as well as their shadow. They stop and we get into them. But those sublime thoughts passing on high do not stop, and we never get into them. Their conductor is not like one of us.

I feel that the man who, in his conversation with me

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 244; Riv. 299.]

about the life of man in New England, lays much stress on railroads, telegraphs, and such enterprises does not go below the surface of things. He treats the shallow and transitory as if it were profound and enduring. In one of the mind's avatars, in the interval between sleeping and waking, aye, even in one of the interstices of a Hindoo dynasty, perchance, such things as the Nineteenth Century, with all its improvements, may come and go again. Nothing makes a deep and lasting impression but what is weighty.

Obey the law which reveals, and not the law revealed.

I wish my neighbors were wilder.

A wildness whose glance no civilization could endure.[1]

He who lives according to the highest law is in one sense lawless. That is an unfortunate discovery, certainly, that of a law which binds us where we did not know that we were bound. Live free, child of the mist! He for whom the law is made, who does not obey the law but whom the law obeys, reclines on pillows of down and is wafted at will whither he pleases, for man is superior to all laws, both of heaven and earth, when he takes his liberty.[2]

Wild as if we lived on the marrow of antelopes devoured raw.[3]

There would seem to be men in whose lives there have been no events of importance, more than in the beetle's which crawls in our path.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 276.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 240; Riv. 295.]
[3] [*Excursions*, p. 225; Riv. 276.]

March 19. The ice in the pond is now soft and will not bear a heavy stone thrown from the bank. It is melted for a rod from the shore. The ground has been bare of snow for some weeks, but yesterday we had a violent northeast snow-storm, which has drifted worse than any the past winter. The spring birds — ducks and geese, etc. — had come, but now the spring seems far off.

No good ever came of obeying a law which you had discovered.

March 23. For a week past the elm buds have been swollen. The willow catkins have put out. The ice still remains in Walden, though it will not bear. Mather Howard saw a large meadow near his house which had risen up but was prevented from floating away by the bushes.

March 27. Walden is two-thirds broken up. It will probably be quite open by to-morrow night.

March 30. Spring is already upon us. I see the tortoises, or rather I hear them drop from the bank into the brooks at my approach. The catkins of the alders have blossomed. The pads are springing at the bottom of the water. The pewee is heard, and the lark.

"It is only the squalid savages and degraded boschmen of creation that have their feeble teeth and tiny stings steeped in venom, and so made formidable," — ants, centipedes, and mosquitoes, spiders, wasps, and scorpions. — HUGH MILLER.

To attain to a true relation to one human creature is enough to make a year memorable.

The man for whom law exists — the man of forms, the conservative — is a tame man.

CARRYING OFF SIMS

A recent English writer (De Quincey),[1] endeavoring to account for the atrocities of Caligula and Nero, their monstrous and anomalous cruelties, and the general servility and corruption which they imply, observes that it is difficult to believe that "the descendants of a people so severe in their habits" as the Romans had been "could thus rapidly" have degenerated and that, "in reality, the citizens of Rome were at this time a new race, brought together from every quarter of the world, but especially from Asia." A vast "proportion of the ancient citizens had been cut off by the sword," and such multitudes of emancipated slaves from Asia had been invested with the rights of citizens "that, in a single generation, Rome became almost transmuted into a baser metal." As Juvenal complained, "the Orontes . . . had mingled its impure waters with those of the Tiber." And "probably, in the time of Nero, not one man in six was of pure Roman descent." Instead of such, says another, "came Syrians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, and other enfranchised slaves." "These in half a century had sunk so low, that Tiberius pronounced her [Rome's][2] very senators to be *homines ad servitutem natos*, men born to be slaves." [3]

[1] [In *The Cæsars.*] [2] [Supplied by Thoreau.]

[3] [Blackwell, *Court of Augustus;* quoted by De Quincey in a note.]

So one would say, in the absence of particular genealogical evidence, that the vast majority of the inhabitants of the city of Boston, even those of senatorial dignity, — the Curtises, Lunts, Woodburys, and others, — were not descendants of the men of the Revolution, — the Hancocks, Adamses, Otises, — but some "Syrians, Cappadocians, and Phrygians," merely, *homines ad servitutem natos*, men born to be slaves. But I would have done with comparing ourselves with our ancestors, for on the whole I believe that even they, if somewhat braver and less corrupt than we, were not men of so much principle and generosity as to go to war in behalf of another race in their midst. I do not believe that the North will soon come to blows with the South on this question. It would be too bright a page to be written in the history of the race at present.

There is such an officer, if not such a man, as the Governor of Massachusetts. What has he been about the last fortnight? He has probably had as much as he could do to keep on the fence during this moral earthquake. It seems to me that no such keen satire, no such cutting insult, could be offered to that man, as the absence of all inquiry after him in this crisis. It appears to [have] been forgotten that there was such a man or such an office. Yet no doubt he has been filling the gubernatorial chair all the while. One Mr. Boutwell, — so named, perchance, because he goes about well to suit the prevailing wind.[1]

In '75 two or three hundred of the inhabitants of

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 390; *Misc.*, Riv. 174.]

Concord assembled at one of the bridges with arms in their hands to assert the right of three millions to tax themselves, to have a voice in governing themselves. About a week ago the authorities of Boston, having the sympathy of many of the inhabitants of Concord, assembled in the gray of the dawn, assisted by a still larger armed force, to send back a perfectly innocent man, and one whom they knew to be innocent, into a slavery as complete as the world ever knew. Of course it makes not the least difference — I wish you to consider this — who the man was, — whether he was Jesus Christ or another, — for inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these his brethren ye did it unto him. Do you think *he* would have stayed here in liberty and let the black man go into slavery in his stead? They sent him back, I say, to live in slavery with other three millions — mark that — whom the same slave power, or slavish power, North and South, holds in that condition, — three millions who do not, like the first mentioned, assert the right to govern themselves but simply to run away and stay away from their prison.

Just a week afterward, those inhabitants of this town who especially sympathize with the authorities of Boston in this their deed caused the bells to be rung and the cannon to be fired to celebrate the courage and the love of liberty of those men who assembled at the bridge. As if *those* three millions had fought for the right to be free themselves, but to hold in slavery three million others. Why, gentlemen, even consistency, though it is much abused, is sometimes a virtue. Every humane and intelligent inhabitant of Concord, when he

or she heard those bells and those cannon, thought not so much of the events of the 19th of April, 1775, as of the event of the 12th of April, 1851.

I wish my townsmen to consider that, whatever the human law may be, neither an individual nor a nation can ever deliberately commit the least act of injustice without having to pay the penalty for it. A government which deliberately enacts injustice, and persists in it! — it will become the laughing-stock of the world.

Much as has been said about American slavery, I think that commonly we do not yet realize what slavery is. If I were seriously to propose to Congress to make mankind into sausages, I have no doubt that most would smile at my proposition and, if any believed me to be in earnest, they would think that I proposed something much worse than Congress had ever done. But, gentlemen, if any of you will tell me that to make a man into a sausage would be much worse — would be any worse — than to make him into a slave, — than it was then to enact the fugitive slave law, — I shall here accuse him of foolishness, of intellectual incapacity, of making a distinction without a difference. The one is just as sensible a proposition as the other.[1]

When I read the account of the carrying back of the fugitive into slavery, which was read last Sunday evening, and read also what was not read here, that the man who made the prayer on the wharf was Daniel Foster of *Concord*, I could not help feeling a slight degree of pride because, of all the towns in the Commonwealth,

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 392–394; *Misc.*, Riv. 177–179.]

Concord was the only one distinctly named as being represented in that new tea-party, and, as she had a place in the first, so would have a place in this, the last and perhaps next most important chapter of the History of Massachusetts. But my second feeling, when I reflected how short a time that gentleman has resided in this town, was one of doubt and shame, because the *men* of Concord in recent times have done nothing to entitle them to the honor of having their town named in such a connection.

I hear a good deal said about trampling this law under foot. Why, one need not go out of his way to do that. This law lies not at the level of the head or the reason. Its natural habitat is in the dirt. It was bred and has its life only in the dust and mire, on a level with the feet; and he who walks with freedom, unless, with a sort of quibbling and Hindoo mercy, he avoids treading on every venomous reptile, will inevitably tread on it, and so trample it under foot.

It has come to this, that the friends of liberty, the friends of the slave, have shuddered when they have understood that his fate has been left to the legal tribunals, so-called, of the country to be decided. The people have no faith that justice will be awarded in such a case. The judge may decide this way or that; it is a kind of accident at best. It is evident that he is not a competent authority in so important a case. I would not trust the life of my friend to the judges of all the Supreme Courts in the world put together, to be sacrificed or saved by precedent. I would much rather trust to the sentiment of the people, which would itself be a

precedent to posterity. In their vote you would get something worth having at any rate, but in the other case only the trammelled judgment of an individual, of no significance, be it which way it will.

I think that recent events will be valuable as a criticism on the administration of justice in our midst, or rather as revealing what are the true sources of justice in any community. It is to some extent fatal to the courts when the people are compelled to go behind the courts. They learn that the courts are made for fair weather and for very civil cases.[1]

[Two pages missing.]

let us entertain opinions of our own; [2] let us be a town and not a suburb, as far from Boston in this sense as we were by the old road which led through Lexington; a place where tyranny may ever be met with firmness and driven back with defeat to its ships.

Concord has several more bridges left of the same sort, which she is taxed to maintain. Can she not raise men to defend them?

As for measures to be adopted, among others I would advise abolitionists to make as earnest and vigorous and persevering an assault on the press, as they have already made, and with effect too, on the church. The church has decidedly improved within a year or two, aye, even within a fortnight; but the press is, almost without exception, corrupt. I believe that in this country the press exerts a greater and a more pernicious

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 394, 395; *Misc.*, Riv. 179, 180.]

[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 397; *Misc.*, Riv. 183.]

influence than the church. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not much care for, we do not read, the Bible, but we do care for and we do read the newspaper. It is a bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking. It is a bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, which the mail and thousands of missionaries are continually dispersing. It is the only book which America has printed, and is capable of exerting an almost inconceivable influence for good or for bad. The editor is [a] preacher whom you voluntarily support. Your tax is commonly one cent, and it costs nothing for pew hire. But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent traveller, as well as my own convictions, when I say that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as are the editors of the periodical press in *this* country. Almost without exception the tone of the press is mercenary and servile. The *Commonwealth*, and the *Liberator*, are the only papers, as far as I know, which make themselves heard in condemnation of the cowardice and meanness of the authorities of Boston as lately exhibited. The other journals, almost without exception, — as the *Advertiser*, the *Transcript*, the *Journal*, the *Times*, *Bee*, *Herald*, etc., — by their manner of referring to and speaking of the Fugitive Slave Law or the carrying back of the slave, insult the common sense of the country. And they do this for the most part, because they think so to secure the approbation of their patrons, and also, one would

think, because they are not aware that a sounder sentiment prevails to any extent.

But, thank fortune, this preacher can be more easily reached by the weapons of the reformer than could the recreant priest. The *free* men of New England have only to refrain from purchasing and reading these sheets, have only to withhold their cents, to kill a score of them at once.[1]

Mahomet made his celestial journey in so short a time that "on his return he was able to prevent the complete overturn of a vase of water, which the angel Gabriel had struck with his wing on his departure."

When he took refuge in a cave near Mecca, being on his flight (Hegira) to Medina, "by the time that the Koreishites [who were close behind] [2] reached the mouth of the cavern, an acacia tree had sprung up before it, in the spreading branches of which a pigeon had made its nest, and laid its eggs, and over the whole a spider had woven its web."

He said of himself, "I am no king, but the son of a Koreishite woman, who ate flesh dried in the sun."

He exacted "a tithe of the productions of the earth, where it was fertilized by brooks and rain; and a twentieth part where its fertility was the result of irrigation."

April 22. Had mouse-ear in blossom for a week. Observed the crowfoot on the Cliffs in abundance, and

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 397–399; *Misc.*, Riv. 183–185.]

[2] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

the saxifrage. The wind last Wednesday, April 16th, blew down a hundred pines on Fair Haven Hill.

Having treated my friend ill, I wished to apologize; but, not meeting him, I made an apology to myself.

It is not the invitation which I hear, but which I feel, that I obey.

April 26. The judge whose words seal the fate of a man for the longest time and furthest into eternity is not he who merely pronounces the verdict of the law, but he, whoever he may be, who, from a love of truth and unprejudiced by any custom or enactment of men, utters a true opinion or *sentence* concerning him. He it is that *sentences* him.[1] More fatal, as affecting his good or ill fame, is the utterance of the least inexpugnable truth concerning him, by the humblest individual, than the sentence of the supremest court in the land.

Gathered the mayflower and cowslips yesterday, and saw the houstonia, violets, etc. Saw a dandelion in blossom.

Are they Americans, are they New-Englanders, are they inhabitants of Concord, — Buttricks and Davises and Hosmers by name, — who read and support the Boston *Herald*, *Advertiser*, *Traveller*, *Journal*, *Transcript*, etc., etc., *Times*? Is that the *Flag of our Union*?

Could slavery suggest a more complete servility? Is there any dust which such conduct does not lick and make fouler still with its slime? Has not the Boston

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 396; *Misc.*, Riv. 181.]

Herald acted its part well, served its master faithfully? How could it have gone lower on its belly? How can a man stoop lower than he is low? do more than put his extremities in the place of that head he has? than make his head his *lower* extremity? And when I say the Boston *Herald* I mean the Boston press, with such few and slight exceptions as need not be made. When I have taken up this paper or the Boston *Times*, with my cuffs turned up, I have heard the gurgling of the sewer through every column; I have felt that I was handling a paper picked out of the public sewers, a leaf from the gospel of the gambling-house, the groggery, and the brothel, harmonizing with the gospel of the Merchants' Exchange.[1]

I do not know but there are some who, if they were tied to the whipping-post and could but get one hand free, would use it to ring the bells and fire the cannon to celebrate their liberty. It reminded me of the Roman Saturnalia, on which even the slaves were allowed to take some liberty. So some of you took the liberty to ring and fire. That was the extent of your freedom; and when the sound of the bells died away, your liberty died away also, and when the powder was all expended, your liberty went off with the smoke. Nowadays men wear a fool's-cap and call it a liberty-cap. The joke could be no broader if the inmates of the prisons were to subscribe for all the powder to be used in such salutes, and hire their jailors to do the firing and ringing for them.[2]

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 399, 400; *Misc.*, Riv. 185, 186.]

[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 393; *Misc.*, Riv. 177, 178.]

April 29. Every man, perhaps, is inclined to think his own situation singular in relation to friendship. Our thoughts would imply that other men *have* friends, though we have not. But I do not know of two whom I can speak of as standing in this relation to one another. Each one makes a standing offer to mankind, "On such and such terms I will give myself to you;" but it is only by a miracle that his terms are ever accepted.

We have to defend ourselves even against those who are nearest to friendship with us.

What a difference it is! — to perform the pilgrimage of life in the society of a mate, and not to have an acquaintance among all the tribes of men!

What signifies the census — this periodical numbering of men — to one who has no friend?

I distinguish between my *actual* and my *real* communication with individuals. I *really* communicate with my friends and congratulate myself and them on our relation and rejoice in their presence and society oftenest when they are personally absent. I remember that not long ago, as I laid my head on my pillow for the night, I was visited by an inexpressible joy that I was permitted to know and be related to such mortals as I was then actually related to; and yet no special event that I could think of had occurred to remind me of any with whom I was connected, and by the next noon, perchance, those essences that had caused me joy would have receded somewhat. I experienced a remarkable gladness in the thought that they existed. Their existence was then blessed to me. Yet such has never been my actual waking relation to any.

Every one experiences that, while his relation to another actually may be one of distrust and disappointment, he may still have relations to him ideally and so really, in spite of both. He is faintly conscious of a confidence and satisfaction somewhere, and all further intercourse is based on this experience of success.

The very dogs and cats incline to affection in their relation to man. It often happens that a man is more humanely related to a cat or dog than to any human being. What bond is it relates us to any animal we keep in the house but the bond of affection? In a degree we grow to love one another.

April 30. What is a chamber to which the sun does not rise in the morning? What is a chamber to which the sun does not set at evening? Such are often the chambers of the mind, for the most part.

Even the cat which lies on a rug all day commences to prowl about the fields at night, resumes her ancient forest habits. The most tenderly bred grimalkin steals forth at night, — watches some bird on its perch for an hour in the furrow, like a gun at rest. She catches no cold; it is her nature. Caressed by children and cherished with a saucer of milk. Even she can erect her back and expand her tail and spit at her enemies like the wild cat of the woods. Sweet Sylvia!

What is the singing of birds, or any natural sound, compared with the voice of one we love?

To one we love we are related as to nature in the spring. Our dreams are mutually intelligible. We take the census, and find that there is one.

Love is a mutual confidence whose foundations no one knows. The one I love surpasses all the laws of nature in sureness. Love is capable of any wisdom.

> "He that hath love and judgment too
> Sees more than any other doe."

By our very mutual attraction, and our attraction to all other spheres, kept properly asunder. Two planets which are mutually attracted, being at the same time attracted by the sun, preserve equipoise and harmony.

Does not the history of chivalry and knight-errantry suggest or point to another relation to woman than leads to marriage, yet an elevating and all-absorbing one, perchance transcending marriage? As yet men know not one another, nor does man know woman.

I am sure that the design of my maker when he has brought me nearest to woman was not the propagation, but rather the maturation, of the species. Man is capable of a love of woman quite transcending marriage.

I observe that the *New York Herald* advertises situations wanted by "respectable young women" by the column, but never by respectable young men, rather "intelligent" and "smart" ones; from which I infer that the public opinion of New York does not require young men to be respectable in the same sense in which it requires young women to be so.

May it consist with the health of some bodies to be impure?

IV

MAY, 1851

(ÆT. 33)

May 1. Observed the *Nuphar advena*, yellow water-lily, in blossom; also the *Laurus Benzoin*, or fever-bush, spice-wood, near William Wheeler's in Lincoln, resembling the witch-hazel. It is remarkable that this aromatic shrub, though it grows by the roadside and does not hide itself, may be, as it were, effectually concealed, though it blossoms every spring. It may be observed only once in many years.

The blossom-buds of the peach have expanded just enough to give a slight peach tint to the orchards.

In regard to purity, I do not know whether I am much worse or better than my acquaintances. If I confine my thought to myself, I appear, whether by constitution or by education, irrevocably impure, as if I should be shunned by my fellow-men if they knew me better, as if I were of two inconsistent natures; but again, when I observe how the mass of men speak of woman and of chastity, — with how little love and reverence, — I feel that so far I am unaccountably better than they. I think that none of my acquaintances has a greater love and admiration for chastity than I have. Perhaps it is necessary that one should actually stand low himself in order to reverence what is high in others.

All distant landscapes seen from hilltops are veritable pictures, which will be found to have no actual existence to him who travels to them. "'T is distance lends enchantment to the view." It is the bare landscape without this depth of atmosphere to glass it. The distant river-reach seen in the north from the Lincoln Hill, high in the horizon, like the ocean stream flowing round Homer's shield, the rippling waves reflecting the light, is unlike the same seen near at hand. Heaven intervenes between me and the object. By what license do I call it Concord River. It redeems the character of rivers to see them thus. They were worthy then of a place on Homer's shield.

As I looked to-day from Mt. Tabor in Lincoln to the Waltham hill, I saw the same deceptive slope, the near hill melting into the further inseparably, indistinguishably; it was one gradual slope from the base of the near hill to the summit of the further one, a succession of copse-woods, but I knew that there intervened a valley two or three miles wide, studded with houses and orchards and drained by a considerable stream. When the shadow of a cloud passed over the nearer hill, I could distinguish its shaded summit against the side of the other.

I had in my mind's eye a silent gray tarn which I had seen the summer before high up on the side of a mountain, Bald Mountain, where the half-dead spruce trees stood far in the water draped with wreathy mist as with usnea moss, made of dews, where the mountain spirit bathed; whose bottom was high above the sur-

face of other lakes. Spruces whose dead limbs were more in harmony with the mists which draped them.

The forenoon that I moved to my house, a poor old lame fellow who had formerly frozen his feet hobbled off the road, came and stood before my door with one hand on each door-post, looking into the house, and asked for a drink of water. I knew that rum or something like it was the only drink he loved, but I gave him a dish of warm pond water, which was all I had, nevertheless, which to my astonishment he drank, being used to drinking.

Nations! What are nations? Tartars! and Huns! and Chinamen! Like insects they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there are so many men. It is individuals that populate the world.

THE SPIRIT OF LODIN

"I look down from my height on nations,
And they become ashes before me;
Calm is my dwelling in the clouds;
Pleasant are the great fields of my rest." [1]

Man is as singular as God.

There is a certain class of unbelievers who sometimes ask me such questions as, if I think that I can live on vegetable food alone; and to strike at the root of the matter at once, I am accustomed to answer such, "Yes, I can live on board nails." If they cannot understand that, they cannot understand much that I

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 473; *Misc.*, Riv. 275, 276.]

have to say. That cuts the matter short with them. For my own part, I am glad to hear of experiments of this kind being tried; as that a young man tried for a fortnight to see if he could live on hard, raw corn on the ear, using his tooth for his only mortar. The squirrel tribe tried the same and succeeded. The human race is interested in these experiments, though a few old women may be alarmed, who own their thirds in mills.[1]

Khaled would have his weary soldiers vigilant still; apprehending a midnight sally from the enemy, "Let no man sleep," said he. "We shall have rest enough after death." Would such an exhortation be understood by Yankee soldiers?

Omar answered the dying Abu Beker: "O successor to the apostle of God! spare me from this burden. I have no need of the Caliphat." "But the Caliphat has need of you!" replied the dying Abu Beker.

"Heraclius had heard of the mean attire of the Caliph Omar, and asked why, having gained so much wealth by his conquests, he did not go richly clad like other princes? They replied, that he cared not for this world, but for the world to come, and sought favor in the eyes of God alone. 'In what kind of a palace does he reside?' asked the emperor. 'In a house built of mud.' 'Who are his attendants?' 'Beggars and the poor.' 'What tapestry does he sit upon?' 'Justice and equity.'

[1] [*Walden*, p. 72; Riv. 103.]

'What is his throne?' 'Abstinence and true knowledge.' 'What is his treasure?' 'Trust in God.' 'And who are his guard?' 'The bravest of the Unitarians.'"

It was the custom of Ziyad, once governor of Bassora, "wherever he held sway, to order the inhabitants to leave their doors open at night, with merely a hurdle at the entrance to exclude cattle, engaging to replace any thing that should be stolen: and so effective was his police, that no robberies were committed."

Abdallah was "so fixed and immovable in prayer, that a pigeon once perched upon his head mistaking him for a statue."

May 6. *Monday.* The Harivansa describes a "substance called *Poroucha*, a spiritual substance known also under the name of Mahat, spirit united to the five elements, soul of being, now enclosing itself in a body like ours, now returning to the eternal body; it is mysterious wisdom, the perpetual sacrifice made by the virtue of the *Yoga*, the fire which animates animals, shines in the sun, and is mingled with all bodies. Its nature is to be born and to die, to pass from repose to movement. The spirit led astray by the senses, in the midst of the creation of Brahma, engages itself in works and knows birth, as well as death. The organs of the senses are its paths, and its work manifests itself in this creation of Brahma. Thought tormented by desires, is like the sea agitated by the wind. Brahma has said: the heart filled with strange affections is to be here below purified by wisdom. Here below even, clothed already as it were in a luminous form, let the spirit,

though clogged by the bonds of the body, prepare for itself an abode sure and permanent.

"He who would obtain final emancipation must abstain from every exterior action. The operation which conducts the pious and penitent Brahman to the knowledge of the truth, is all interior, intellectual, mental. They are not ordinary practices which can bring light into the soul.

"The Mouni who desires his final emancipation will have care evening and morning to subdue his senses, to fix his mind on the divine essence, and to transport himself by the force of his soul to the eternal abode of Vichnou. Although he may have engaged in works, he does not wear the clog of them, because his soul is not attached to them. A being returns to life in consequence of the affection which he has borne for terrestrial things: he finds himself emancipated, when he has felt only indifference for them.

"The Richis mingle with nature, which remains strange to their senses. Luminous and brilliant they cover themselves with a humid vapor, under which they seem no more to exist, although existing always, like the thread which is lost and confounded in the woof.

"Free in this world, as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chain.

"Thus the Yogin, absorbed in contemplation, contributes for his part to creation: he breathes a divine perfume, he hears wonderful things. Divine forms traverse him without tearing him, and united to the nature which is proper to him, he goes, he acts, as animating original matter."

Like some other preachers, I have added my texts — derived from the Chinese and Hindoo scriptures — long after my discourse was written.

A commentary on the Sankhya Karika says, "By external knowledge worldly distinction is acquired; by internal knowledge, liberation."

The Sankhya Karika says, "By attainment of perfect knowledge, virtue and the rest become causeless; yet soul remains awhile invested with body, as the potter's wheel continues whirling from the effect of the impulse previously given to it."

I rejoice that horses and steers have to [be] *broken* before they can be made the slaves of men, and that men themselves have some wild oats still left to sow before they become submissive members of society. Undoubtedly all men are not equally fit subjects for civilization, and because the majority, like dogs and sheep, are tame by inherited disposition, is no reason why the others should have their natures broken, that they may be reduced to the same level. Men are in the main alike, but they were made several in order that [they] might be various. If a low use is to be served, one man will do nearly or quite as well as another; if a high one, individual excellence is to be regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away, but no other man can serve that use which the author of this illustration did. Confucius says, "The skins of the tiger and the leopard when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the

sheep tanned." But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious. It is evident, then, that tanning their skins for shoes and the like is not the best use to which they can be put.[1]

How important is a constant intercourse with nature and the contemplation of natural phenomena to the preservation of moral and intellectual health! The discipline of the schools or of business can never impart such serenity to the mind. The philosopher contemplates human affairs as calmly and from as great a remoteness as he does natural phenomena. The ethical philosopher needs the discipline of the natural philosopher. He approaches the study of mankind with great advantages who is accustomed to the study of nature.

The Brahman Saradwata, says the Dharma Sacontala, was at first confounded on entering the city, "but now," says he, "I look on it as the freeman on the captive, as a man just bathed in pure water on a man smeared with oil and dust."

May 10. Heard the snipe over the meadows this evening.

May 12. Heard the golden robin and the bobolink.

But where she has her seat, — whether in Westford or in Boxboro, — not even the assessors know. Inquire perchance of that dusky family on the cross-road, which is said to have Indian blood in their veins. Or perchance where this old cellar-hole now grassed over is faintly

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 235, 236; Riv. 288, 289.]

visible, Nature once had her dwelling. Ask the crazy old woman who brings huckleberries to the village, but who lives nobody knows where.

If I have got false teeth, I trust that I have not got a false conscience. It is safer to employ the dentist than the priest to repair the deficiencies of nature.

By taking the ether the other day I was convinced how far asunder a man could be separated from his senses. You are told that it will make you unconscious, but no one can imagine what it is to be unconscious — how far removed from the state of consciousness and all that we call "this world" — until he has experienced it. The value of the experiment is that it does give you experience of an interval as between one life and another, — a greater space than you ever travelled. You are a sane mind without organs, — groping for organs, — which if it did not soon recover its old senses would get new ones. You expand like a seed in the ground. You exist in your roots, like a tree in the winter. If you have an inclination to travel, take the ether; you go beyond the furthest star.

It is not necessary for them to take ether, who in their sane and waking hours are ever translated by a thought; nor for them to see with their hindheads, who sometimes see from their foreheads; nor listen to the spiritual knockings, who attend to the intimations of reason and conscience.

May 16. Heard the whip-poor-will this evening. A splendid full moon to-night. Walked from 6.30 to

10 P. M. Lay on a rock near a meadow, which had absorbed and retained much heat, so that I could warm my back on it, it being a cold night. I found that the side of the sand-hill was cold on the surface, but warm two or three inches beneath.[1]

If there is a more splendid moonlight than usual, only the belated traveller observes it. When I am outside, on the outskirts of the town, enjoying the still majesty of the moon, I am wont to think that all men are aware of this miracle, that they too are silently worshipping this manifestation of divinity elsewhere. But when I go into the house I am undeceived; they are absorbed in checkers or chess or novel, though they may have been advertised of the brightness through the shutters.

In the moonlight night what intervals are created! The rising moon is related to the near pine tree which rises above the forest, and we get a juster notion of distance. The moon is only somewhat further off and on one side. There may be only three objects, — myself, a pine tree, and the moon, nearly equidistant.

Talk of demonstrating the rotation of the earth on its axis, — see the moon rise, or the sun!

The moonlight reveals the beauty of trees. By day it is so light and in this climate so *cold* commonly, that we do not perceive their shade. We do not know when we are beneath them.

According to Michaux, the canoe birch (*Betula papyracea*) ceases below the forty-third degree of latitude. Sections of the wood from just below the first

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 328; Riv. 403.]

ramification are used to inlay mahogany, in these parts. It is brought from Maine for fuel.

Common white birch (*B. populifolia*) not found south of Virginia. Its epidermis incapable of being divided like the canoe birch and the European white.

The common alder (*Alnus serrulata*) blooms in January.

The locust (*Robinia Pseudacacia*) was one of the earliest trees introduced into Europe from America (by one Robin, about 1601); now extensively propagated in England, France, and Germany. Used for trunnels to the exclusion of all others in the Middle and Southern States. Instead of decaying, acquire hardness with time.

May 18. *Sunday.* Lady's-slipper almost fully blossomed. The log of a canoe birch on Fair Haven, cut down the last winter, more than a foot in diameter at the stump; one foot in diameter at ten feet from the ground. I observed that all parts of the epidermis exposed to the air and light were white, but the inner surfaces, freshly exposed, were a buff or salmon-color. Sinclair says that in winter it is white throughout. But this was cut before the sap flowed ? ?! Was there any sap in the log ? I counted about fifty rings. The shrub oaks are now blossoming. The scarlet tanagers are come. The oak leaves of all colors are just expanding, and are more beautiful than most flowers. The hickory buds are almost leaves. The landscape has a new life and light infused into it. The deciduous trees are springing, to countenance the pines, which are evergreen. It seems to take but one summer day to fetch the summer in. The turning-point between

winter and summer is reached. The birds are in full blast. There is a peculiar freshness about the landscape; you scent the fragrance of new leaves, of hickory and sassafras, etc. And to the eye the forest presents the tenderest green. The blooming of the apple trees is becoming general.

I think that I have made out two kinds of poplar, — the *Populus tremuloides*, or American aspen, and the *P. grandidentata*, or large American aspen, whose young leaves are downy.

Michaux says that the locust begins to convert its sap into perfect wood from the third year; which is not done by the oak, the chestnut, the beech, and the elm till after the tenth or the fifteenth year.

He quotes the saying, "The foot of the owner is the best manure for his land." "He" is Augustus L. Hillhouse, who writes the account of the olive at the request of Michaux.

The elder Michaux found the balsam poplar (*P. balsamifera*) very abundant on Lake St. John and the Saguenay River, where it is eighty feet high and three feet in diameter. This, however, is distinct from the *P. candicans*, heart-leaved balsam poplar, which M. finds hereabouts, though never in the woods, and does not know where it came from.

He praises the Lombardy poplar because, its limbs being compressed about the trunk, it does not interfere with the walls of a house nor obstruct the windows.

No wood equal to our black ash for oars, so pliant and

elastic and strong, second only to hickory for handspikes; used also for chair-bottoms and riddles.

The French call the nettle-tree *bois inconnu.*

Our white elm (*Ulmus Americana*) "the most magnificent vegetable of the temperate zone."

The *Pinus mitis*, yellow pine, or spruce pine, or short-leaved pine. A two-leaved pine widely diffused, but not found northward beyond certain districts of Connecticut and Massachusetts. In New Jersey fifty or sixty feet high and fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter. Sometimes three leaves on fresh shoots; smallest of pine cones; seeds cast first year. Very excellent wood for houses, masts, decks, yards, beams, and cabins, next in durability to the long-leaved pine. Called at Liverpool New York pine. Its regular branches make it to be called spruce pine sometimes.

Pinus australis, or long-leaved pine, an invaluable tree, called yellow pine, pitch pine, and broom pine where it grows; in the North, Southern pine and red pine; in England, Georgia pitch pine. First appears at Norfolk, Virginia; thence stretches six hundred miles southwest. Sixty or seventy feet high, by fifteen to eighteen inches; leaves a foot long, three in a sheath; negroes use them for brooms. Being stronger, more compact and durable, because the resin is equally distributed, and also fine-grained and susceptible of a bright polish, it is preferred to every other pine. In naval architecture, most esteemed of all pines, — keels, beams, side-planks, trunnels, etc. For decks preferred to yellow pine, — and flooring houses. Sold for more at Liverpool than any other pine. Moreover it supplies

nearly all the resinous matter used and exported. Others which contain much pitch are more dispersed. At present (1819) this business is confined to North Carolina.

M. says the branches of resinous trees consist almost wholly of *wood*, of which the organization is even more perfect than in the body of the tree. They use dead wood for the tar, etc., in which it has accumulated.

Says the vicinity of Brunswick, Me., and Burlington, Vt., are the most northerly limits of the pitch pine or *P. rigida*. (I saw what I should have called a pitch pine at Montmorency.)

White pine (*P. Strobus*) most abundant between forty-third and forty-seventh degrees, one hundred and eighty feet by seven and eight twelfths the largest. "The loftiest and most valuable" of the productions of the New Hampshire forest.

The black spruce is called *épinette noire* and *épinette à la bière* in Canada. From its strength best substitute for oak and larch. Used here for rafters and preferred to hemlock; tougher than white pine, but more liable to crack.

The white spruce (*Abies alba*) called *épinette blanche* in Canada. Not so large as the last and wood inferior.

Hemlock spruce (*Abies Canadensis*) called *pérusse* in Canada. In Maine, Vermont, and upper New Hampshire, three fourths of the evergreen woods, the rest being black spruce. Belongs to cold regions; begins to appear about Hudson's Bay. Its fibre makes the circuit of stocks fifteen or twenty inches in diameter in ascending five or six feet. Old trees have their circles separated, and the boards are *shaky*. Decays

rapidly when exposed to the air. It is firmer, though coarser, than the white pine; affords tighter hold to nails. Used in Maine for threshing-floors, resisting indentation. Most common use sheathing of houses, to be covered with clapboards. Used for laths.

White cedar (*Cupressus thyoides*). "The perfect wood resists the succession of dryness and moisture longer than that of any other species;" hence for shingles.

Larch (*Larix Americana*); in Canada *épinette rouge; tamarack* by the Dutch. Male aments appear before the leaves. Wood superior to any pine or spruce in strength and durability. Used in Maine for knees.

Cedar of Lebanon (*Larix cedrus*) largest and most majestic of resinous trees of the Old World and one of the finest vegetable productions of the globe.

Cedar Island in Lake Champlain northern limit of red cedar (*Juniperus Virginiana*). Eastward, not beyond Wiscasset. Seeds mature at beginning of fall and *sown at once;* shoot next spring. Gin made from them.

Arbor-vitæ (*Thuya occidentalis*), the only species of *Thuya* in the New World. Lake St. John in Canada its northern limit; abounds between 48° 50′ and 45°. The posts last thirty-five or forty years, and the rails sixty, or three or four times as long as those of any other species. In northern New England States the best for fences; last longer in clay than sand.

The superiority of mahogany in the fineness of its grain and its hardness, which make it susceptible of a brilliant polish. Native trees in Northern States used in cabinet making are black, yellow, and canoe birches,

red-flowering curled maple, bird's-eye maple, wild cherry, and sumach.

The circle[s] of peck and other measures made at Hingham of black, red, or gray oak are "always of a dull blue color, produced by the gallic acid of the wood acting upon the iron vessel in which it is boiled."

White ash used for sieve rims, rake heads and handles, scythe handles, pulleys, etc. Rake teeth of the mockernut hickory.

In New York and Philadelphia "the price [of wood for fuel] [1] nearly equals and sometimes exceeds that of the best wood in Paris, though this immense capital annually requires more than 300,000 cords, and is surrounded to the distance of 300 miles by cultivated plains." Said in book of 1819.

May 19. Found the *Arum triphyllum* and the nodding trillium, or wake-robin, in Conant's Swamp. An ash also in bloom there, and the sassafras quite striking. Also the fringed polygala by Conantum wood.

Sinclair says the hornbeam is called "swamp beech" in Vermont.

May 20. *Tuesday.* There is, no doubt, a perfect analogy between the life of the human being and that of the vegetable, both of the body and the mind. The botanist Gray says: —

"The organs of plants are of two sorts: — 1. Those of *Vegetation*, which are concerned in growth, — by

[1] [Supplied by Thoreau.]

which the plant takes in the aërial and earthy matters on which it lives, and elaborates them into the materials of its own organized substance; 2. Those of *Fructification* or *Reproduction*, which are concerned with the propagation of the species."

So is it with the human being. I am concerned first to come to my *Growth*, intellectually and morally (and physically, of course, as a means to this, for the body is the symbol of the soul), and then to bear my *Fruit*, do my *Work*, *propagate* my kind, not only physically but *morally*, not only in body but in mind.

"The organs of vegetation are the *Root*, *Stem*, and *Leaves*. The *Stem* is the axis and original basis of the plant."

"The first point of the stem preëxists in the embryo (*i. e.* in the rudimentary plantlet contained within the seed): it is here called the radicle." Such is the rudiment of mind, already partially developed, more than a bud, but pale, having never been exposed to the light, and slumbering coiled up, packed away in the seed, unfolded [*sic*].

Consider the still pale, rudimentary, infantine, radicle-like thoughts of some students, which who knows what they might expand to, if they should ever come to the light and air, if they do not become rancid and perish in the seed. It is not every seed that will survive a thousand years. Other thoughts further developed, but yet pale and languid, like shoots grown in a cellar.

"The plant . . . develops from the first in two opposite directions, *viz.* upwards [to expand in the light and air] to produce and continue the stem (or

ascending axis), and downwards [avoiding the light][1] to form the root (or *descending* axis). The former is ordinarily or in great part aërial, the latter subterranean."

So the mind develops from the first in two opposite directions: upwards to expand in the light and air; and downwards avoiding the light to form the root. One half is aërial, the other subterranean. The mind is not well balanced and firmly planted, like the oak, which has not as much root as branch, whose roots like those of the white pine are slight and near the surface. One half of the mind's development must still be root, — in the embryonic state, in the womb of nature, more unborn than at first. For each successive new idea or bud, a new rootlet in the earth. The growing man penetrates yet deeper by his roots into the womb of things. The infant is comparatively near the surface, just covered from the light; but the man sends down a tap-root to the centre of things.

The mere logician, the mere reasoner, who weaves his arguments as a tree its branches in the sky, — nothing equally developed in the roots, — is overthrown by the first wind.

As with the roots of the plant, so with the roots of the mind, the branches and branchlets of the root "are mere repetitions for the purpose of multiplying the absorbing points, which are chiefly the growing or newly formed extremities, sometimes termed *spongelets*. It bears no other organs."

So this organ of the mind's development, the *Root*, bears no organs but spongelets or absorbing points.

[1] [The bracketed portions in both cases are Thoreau's.]

Annuals, which perish root and all the first season, especially have slender and thread-like fibrous roots. But biennials are particularly characterized by distended, fleshy roots containing starch, a stock for future growth, to be consumed during their second or flowering season, — as carrots, radishes, turnips. Perennials frequently have many thickened roots clustered together, tuberous or palmate roots, fasciculated or clustered as in the dahlia, pæony, etc.

Roots may spring from any part of the stem under favorable circumstances; "that is to say in darkness and moisture, as when covered by the soil or resting on its surface."

That is, the most clear and ethereal ideas (Antæus-like) readily ally themselves to the earth, to the primal womb of things. They put forth roots as soon as branches; they are eager to be *soiled*. No thought soars so high that it sunders these apron-strings of its mother. The thought that comes to light, that pierces the empyrean on the other side, is wombed and rooted in darkness, a moist and fertile darkness, — its roots in Hades like the tree of life. No idea is so soaring but it will readily put forth roots. Wherever there is an air-and-light-seeking bud about to expand, it may become in the earth a darkness-seeking root. Even swallows and birds-of-paradise *can* walk on the ground. To quote the sentence from Gray entire: "Roots not only spring from the root-end of the primary stem in germination, but also from any subsequent part of the stem under favorable circumstances, that is to say, in darkness and moisture, as when covered by the soil or resting on its surface."

No thought but is connected as strictly as a flower, with the earth. The mind flashes not so far on one side but its rootlets, its spongelets, find their way instantly on the other side into a moist darkness, uterine, — a low bottom in the heavens, even miasma-exhaling to such immigrants as are not acclimated. A cloud is uplifted to sustain its roots. Imbosomed in clouds as in a chariot, the mind drives through the boundless fields of space. Even there is the dwelling of Indra.

I might here quote the following, with the last — of roots: "They may even strike in the open air and light, as is seen in the copious aërial rootlets by which the Ivy, the Poison Ivy, and the Trumpet Creeper climb and adhere to the trunks of trees or other bodies; and also in Epiphytes or Air-plants, of most warm regions, which have no connection whatever with the soil, but germinate and grow high in air on the trunks or branches of trees, etc.; as well as in some terrestrial plants, such as the Banian and Mangrove, that send off aërial roots from their trunks or branches, which finally reach the ground."

So, if our light-and-air-seeking tendencies extend too widely for our original root or stem, we must send downward new roots to ally us to the earth.

Also there are parasitic plants which have their roots in the branches or roots of other trees, as the mistletoe, the beech-drops, etc. There are minds which so have their roots in other minds as in the womb of nature, — if, indeed, most are not such?!

May 21. *Wednesday.* Yesterday I made out the black

and the white ashes. A double male white ash in Miles's Swamp, and two black ashes with sessile leaflets. A female white ash near railroad, in Stow's land. The white ashes by Mr. Pritchard's have no blossoms, at least as yet.

If I am right, the *black* ash is improperly so called, from the color of its bark being lighter than the white. Though it answers to the description in other respects, even to the elder-like odor of the leaves, I should like still to see a description of the yellow ash which grows in made [*sic*].

The day before yesterday I found the male sassafras in abundance but no female.

The leaves of my new pine on Merriam's or Pine Hill are of intermediate length between those of the yellow pine and the Norway pine. I can find no cone to distinguish the tree by; but, as the leaves are *semicylindrical* and not *hollowed* I think it must be the red or Norway Pine, though it does not look very red, and is *spruce!* answering perhaps to the description of the yellow pine, which is sometimes called spruce pine.

To-day examined the flowers of the *Nemopanthes Canadensis*, — a genus of a single species, says Emerson. It bears the beautiful crimson velvety berry of the swamps, and is what I have heard called the cornel. Common name wild holly.

I have heard now within a few days that peculiar dreaming sound of the frogs [1] which belongs to the summer, — their midsummer night's dream.

[1] [Toads. See p. 250.]

Only that thought and that expression are good which are musical.

I think that we are not commonly aware that man is our contemporary, — that in this strange, outlandish world, so barren, so prosaic, fit not to live in but merely to pass through, that even here so divine a creature as man does actually live. Man, the crowning fact, the god we know. While the earth supports so rare an inhabitant, there is somewhat to cheer us. Who shall say that there is no God, if there is a *just* man. It is only within a year that it has occurred to me that there is such a being actually existing on the globe. Now that I perceive that it is so, many questions assume a new aspect. We have not only the idea and vision of the divine ourselves, but we have brothers, it seems, who have this idea also. Methinks my neighbor is better than I, and his thought is better than mine. There is a representative of the divinity on earth, of [whom] all things fair and noble are to be expected. We have the material of heaven here. I think that the standing miracle to man is man. Behind the paling yonder, come rain or shine, hope or doubt, there dwells a man, an actual being who can sympathize with our sublimest thoughts.

The revelations of nature are infinitely glorious and cheering, hinting to us of a remote future, of possibilities untold; but startlingly near to us some day we find a fellow-man.

The frog had eyed the heavens from his marsh, until his mind was filled with visions, and he saw more than belongs to this fenny earth. He mistrusted that he was become a dreamer and visionary. Leaping across the

swamp to his fellow, what was his joy and consolation to find that he too had seen the same sights in the heavens, he too had dreamed the same dreams!

From nature we turn astonished to this *near* but supernatural fact.

I think that the existence of man in nature is the divinest and most startling of all facts. It is a fact which few have realized.

I can go to my neighbors and meet on ground as elevated as we could expect to meet upon if we were now in heaven.

> "And we live,
> We of this mortal mixture, in the same law
> As the pure colorless intelligence
> Which dwells in Heaven, and the dead Hadean shades."

I do not think that man can understand the *importance* of man's existence, its bearing on the other phenomena of life, until it shall become a remembrance to him the survivor that such a being or such a race once existed on the earth. Imagine yourself alone in the world, a musing, wondering, reflecting spirit, *lost* in thought, and imagine thereafter the creation of man! — man made in the image of God!

Looking into a book on dentistry the other day, I observed a list of authors who had written on this subject. There were Ran and Tan and Yungerman, and I was impressed by the fact that there was nothing in a name. It was as if they had been named by the child's rigmarole of *Iery* [*wiery*] *ichery van*, *tittle-tol-tan*, etc. I saw in my mind a herd of wild creatures swarming over the earth, and to each one its own herdsman had affixed

some barbarous name, or sound, or syllables, in his own dialect, — so in a thousand languages. Their names were seen to be as meaningless exactly as Bose or Tray, the names of dogs.[1] Men get named no better.

We seem to be distinct ourselves, never repeated, and yet we bear no names which express a proportionate distinctness; they are quite accidental. Take away their names, and you leave men a wild herd, distinguished only by their individual qualities. It is as if you were to give names in the Caffre dialect to the individuals in a herd of spring-boks or gnus.

We have but few patronymics, but few Christian names, in proportion to the number of us. Is it that men ceased to be original when genuine and original names ceased to be given. Have we not enough character to establish a new patronymic.

Methinks it would be some advantage to philosophy if men were *named* merely in the gross, as they are known. It would only be necessary to know the genus and, perchance, the species and variety, to know the individual.

I will not allow *mere names* to make distinctions for me, but still see men in herds for all *them*. A familiar name cannot make a man less strange to me. It may be given to a savage who retains in secret his own wild title earned in the woods. I see that the neighbor who wears the familiar epithet of William or Edwin takes it off with his jacket. It does not adhere to him when asleep or when in anger, or aroused by any passion or inspiration. I seem to hear pronounced by some of his

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 236; Riv. 289.]

kin at such a time his original wild name in some jaw-breaking or else melodious tongue. As the names of the Poles and Russians are to us, so are ours to them.

Our names are as cheap as the names given to dogs. We know what are dogs' names; we know what are men's names. Sometimes it would be significant and truer, it would lead to generalization, it would avoid exaggeration, to say, "*There was a man* who said or did —," instead of designating him by some familiar, but perchance delusive, name.

We hardly believe that every private soldier in a Roman army had a name of his own.[1]

It is interesting to see how the names of famous men are repeated, — even of great poets and philosophers. The poet is not known to-day even by his neighbors to be more than a common man. He is perchance the butt of many. The proud farmer looks down [on] and boorishly ignores him, or regards him as a loafer who treads down his grass, but perchance in course of time the poet will have so succeeded that some of the farmer's posterity, though equally boorish with their ancestor, will bear the poet's name. The boor names his boy Homer, and so succumbs unknowingly to the bard's victorious fame. Anything so fine as poetic genius he cannot more directly recognize. The unpoetic farmer names his child Homer.

You have a wild savage in you, and a savage name is perchance somewhere recorded as yours.[2]

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 236, 237; Riv. 289–291.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 237; Riv. 290.]

May 23. *Friday.* And wilder still there grows elsewhere, I hear, a native and aboriginal crab-apple, *Malus* (as Michaux, or, as Emerson has it, *Pyrus*) *coronaria* in Southern States, and also *angustifolia* in the Middle States; whose young leaves "have a bitter and slightly aromatic taste" (Michaux), whose beautiful flowers perfume the air to a great distance. "The apples . . . are small, green, intensely acid, and very odoriferous. Some farmers make cider of them, which is said to be excellent: they make very fine sweet-meats also, by the addition of a large quantity of sugar" (Michaux). Celebrated for "the beauty of its flowers, and for the sweetness of its perfume" (Michaux).[1]

Michaux says that the wild apple of Europe has yielded to cultivation nearly three hundred species in France alone. Emerson says, referring to Loudon, "In 1836, the catalogue and the gardens of the London Horticultural Society contained upwards of 1400 distinct sorts, and new ones are every year added."

But here are species which they have not in their catalogue, not to mention the varieties which the crab might yield to cultivation.[2]

This genus, so kind to the human race, the *Malus* or *Pyrus; Rosaceæ* the family, or others say *Pomaceæ*. Its flowers are perhaps the most beautiful of any tree. I am frequently compelled to turn and linger by some more than usually beautiful two-thirds-expanded blossoms.[3] If such were not so common, its fame would be

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 301; Riv. 370.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 316; Riv. 388.]
[3] [*Excursions*, p. 294; Riv. 361.]

loud as well as wide. Its most copious and delicious blossoms.

But our wild apple is wild perchance like myself, who belong not to the aboriginal race here, but have strayed into the woods from the cultivated stock,[1] — where the birds, where winged thoughts or agents, have planted or are planting me. Even these at length furnish hardy stocks for the orchard.

You might call one *Malus oculata;* another *M. Iridis; M. cum parvuli dæmonis oculis,* or Imp-eyed: Blue-Jay Apple, or *M. corvi cristati;* Wood-Dell Apple (*M. silvestri-vallis*); Field-Dell Apple (*M. campestri-vallis*); Meadow Apple (*M. pratensis*); Rock Meadow Apple (*saxopratensis*); Partridge or Grouse Apple or bud [*sic*]; Apple of the Hesperides (*Malus Hesperidum*); Woodside Apple; Wood Apple (*M. silvatica*); the Truant's Apple (*M. cessatoris*); Saunterer's Apple (*M. erronis vel vagabundi*); the Wayside Apple (*M. trivialis*); Beauty of the Air (*decus aëris*); December-eating; Frozen-thawed (*gelato-soluta* or *gelata regelata*); the Concord Apple (*M. Concordiensis*); the Brindled Apple; Wine of New England (*M. vinosa*); the Chickaree Apple; the Green Apple (*M. viridis*); the Dysentery or Cholera-morbus Apple.[2]

Distinctly related things are strangely near in *fact,* brush one another with their jackets. Perchance this window-seat in which we sit discoursing Transcendentalism, with only Germany and Greece stretching behind our minds, was made so deep because this was a few

[1] [*Excursions,* p. 301; Riv. 369.]

[2] [*Excursions,* p. 316; Riv. 388, 389.]

years ago a garrison-house, with thick log walls, bullet-proof, behind which men sat to escape the wild red man's bullet and the arrow and the tomahawk, and bullets fired by Indians are now buried in its walls. Pythagoras seems near compared with them.

May 24. *Saturday.* Our most glorious experiences are a kind of regret. Our regret is so sublime that we may mistake it for triumph. It is the painful, plaintively sad surprise of our Genius remembering our past lives and contemplating what is possible. It is remarkable that men commonly never refer to, never hint at, any crowning experiences when the common laws of their being were unsettled and the divine and eternal laws prevailed in them. Their lives are not revolutionary; they never recognize any other than the local and temporal authorities. It is a regret so divine and inspiring, so genuine, based on so true and distinct a contrast, that it surpasses our proudest boasts and the fairest expectations.

My most sacred and memorable life is commonly on awaking in the morning. I frequently awake with an atmosphere about me as if my unremembered dreams had been divine, as if my spirit had journeyed to its native place, and, in the act of reëntering its native body, had diffused an elysian fragrance around.

The Genius says: "Ah! That is what you were! That is what you may yet be!" It is glorious for us to be able to regret even such an existence.

A sane and growing man revolutionizes every day. What institutions of man can survive a morning experi-

ence? A single night's sleep, if we have indeed slumbered and forgotten anything and grown in our sleep, puts them behind us like the river Lethe. It is no unusual thing for him to see the kingdoms of this world pass away.[1]

It is an interesting inquiry to seek for the medicines which will cure our ails in the plants which grow around us. At first we are not disposed to believe that man and plants are so intimately related. Very few plants have been medically examined. And yet this is the extent of most men's botany; and it is more extensive than would at first be supposed. The botanist is startled by some countryman's familiarity with an obscure plant to him rare and strange. He, who has been an observer for some years, knows not what it is, but the unobserving countryman, who sees nothing but what is thrust upon him, or the old woman who rarely goes out of the house, shows an easy familiarity with it and can call it by name.

I am struck by the fact that, though any important individual experience is rare, though it is so rare that the individual is conscious of a relation to his maker transcending time and space and earth, though any knowledge of, or communication from, "Providence" is the rarest thing in the world, yet men very easily, regarding themselves in the gross, speak of carrying out the designs of Providence as nations. How often the Saxon man talks of carrying out the designs of Providence, as if he had some knowledge of Providence

[1] *Vide* [p. 286].

and His designs. Men allow themselves to associate Providence and designs of Providence with their dull, prosaic, every-day thoughts of things. That language is usurped by the stalest and deadest prose, which can only report the most choice poetic experience. This "Providence" is the stalest jest in the universe. The office-boy sweeps out his office "by the leave of Providence."

May 25. A fine, freshening air, a little hazy, that bathes and washes everything, saving the day from extreme heat. Walked to the hills south of Wayland by the road by Deacon Farrar's. First vista just beyond Merron's (?), looking west down a valley, with a verdant-columned elm at the extremity of the vale and the blue hills and horizon beyond. These are the resting-places in a walk. We love to see any part of the earth tinged with blue, cerulean, the color of the sky, the celestial color. I wonder that houses are not oftener located mainly that they may command particular rare prospects, every convenience yielding to this. The farmer would never suspect what it was you were buying, and such sites would be the cheapest of any. A site where you might avail yourself of the art of Nature for three thousand years, which could never be materially changed or taken from you, a noble inheritance for your children. The true sites for human dwellings are unimproved. They command no price in the market. Men will pay something to look into a travelling showman's box, but not to look upon the fairest prospects on the earth. A vista where you have the near green horizon contrasted with

the distant blue one, terrestrial with celestial earth. The prospect of a vast horizon must be accessible in our neighborhood. Where men of enlarged views may be educated. An unchangeable kind of wealth, a *real* estate.

There we found the celandine in blossom and the *Ranunculus bulbosus*, which we afterwards saw *double* in Wayland, having nine petals.

The *Pyrus arbutifolia*, variety *melanocarpa*. Gray makes also the variety *erythrocarpa*. Is this the late red choke-berry of the swamps? and is the former the earlier black one of the swamps?

By Farrar's the *Nepeta Glechoma*, a kind of mint. Linnæus calls it *Glechoma hederacea*. Looks somewhat like catnep.

The marsh-marigold, *Caltha palustris*, improperly called cowslip.

The white oak, *Quercus alba*. And the commonest scrub oak, the bear or black oak, *Q. ilicifolia*.

The chinquapin, or dwarf chestnut, oak, the smallest of our oaks, *Q. prinoides*.

The *Cratægus coccinea* (?), or scarlet-fruited thorn (?)

Another glorious vista with a wide horizon at the yellow Dutch house, just over the Wayland line, by the black spruce, heavy and dark as night, which we could see two or three miles as a landmark. Now at least, before the deciduous trees have fully expanded their leaves, it is remarkably black. It is more stoutly and irregularly branched than Holbrook's spruces — has a much darker foliage; but the cone scales of both are slightly waved or notched. Are they, then, both

black spruce? The cones are enough like, and the thickness of the leaves; their color enough unlike. Here is a view of the Jenkins house, the fish-pole house, and Wachusett beyond.

Noticed what I think must be a young poison sumach[1] abundant by the roadside in woods, with last year's berries, with small greenish-yellow flowers, but leaves not pinnatifid, three together; from one to two feet high. What is it?

Alnus serrulata, the common alder, with a grayish stem, leaves smooth on both sides.

Alnus incana, the speckled alder, downy on under side of leaves.

The hard-berried plant seems to be *Andromeda ligustrina* (?) of Gray, *A. paniculata* of Bigelow, *Lyonia paniculata* of Emerson.

Thyme-leaved veronica, little bluish-white, streak-petalled flower by road sides. *Silene Pennsylvanica.*

What is the orange-yellow aster-like flower of the meadows now in blossom with a sweet-smelling stem when bruised?[2]

What the delicate pinkish and yellowish flower with hoary-green stem and leaves, of rocky hills.[3]

Saw Bunker Hill Monument and Charlestown from the Wayland hills, and across the valleys to Milton Hill.[4] Westward, or west by south, an island in a pond or in the river (!which see!) A grand horizon. Probably saw the elm between Wayland and Weston which is seen so

[1] Ivy? [2] Golden senecio. [3] Corydalis.

[4] [Doubtless Blue Hill is meant, not the lower eminence known as Milton Hill.]

far in the horizon from the northwest part of Sudbury. A good, a rare place this must be to view the Sudbury or Wayland meadows a little earlier.

Came back across lots to the black spruce.

Now, at 8.30 o'clock P. M., I hear the dreaming of the frogs.[1] So it seems to me, and so significantly passes my life away. It is like the dreaming of frogs in a summer evening.

May 27. I saw an organ-grinder this morning before a rich man's house, thrilling the street with harmony, loosening the very paving-stones and tearing the routine of life to rags and tatters, when the lady of the house shoved up a window and in a semiphilanthropic tone inquired if he wanted anything to eat. But he, very properly it seemed to me, kept on grinding and paid no attention to her question, feeding her ears with melody unasked for. So the world shoves up its window and interrogates the poet, and sets him to gauging ale casks in return. It seemed to me that the music suggested that the recompense should be as fine as the gift. It would be much nobler to enjoy the music, though you paid no money for it, than to presume always a beggarly relation. It is after all, perhaps, the best instrumental music that we have.

May 28. The trees now begin to shade the streets. When the sun gets high in the sky the trees give shade. With oppressive heats come refreshing shadows.

The buttercups spot the churchyard.

[1] [Toads. See p. 250.]

May 29. It is evident that the virtues of plants are almost completely unknown to us, and we esteem the few with which we are better acquainted unreasonably above the many which are comparatively unknown to us. Bigelow says: "It is a subject of some curiosity to consider, if the knowledge of the present Materia Medica were by any means to be lost, how many of the same articles would again rise into notice and use. Doubtless a variety of new substances would develop unexpected powers, while perhaps the poppy would be shunned as a deleterious plant, and the cinchona might grow unmolested upon the mountains of Quito." Sawyer regards *Nux vomica* among the most valuable. B. says (1817): "We have yet to discover our anodynes and our emetics, although we abound in bitters, astringents, aromatics, and demulcents. In the present state of our knowledge we could not well dispense with opium and ipecacuanha, yet a great number of foreign drugs, such as gentian, columbo, chamomile, kino, catechu, cascarilla, canella, etc., for which we pay a large annual tax to other countries, might in all probability be superseded by the indigenous products of our own. It is certainly better that our own country people should have the benefit of collecting such articles, than that we should pay for them to the Moors of Africa, or the Indians of Brazil."

The thorn-apple (*Datura Stramonium*) (apple of Peru, devil's-apple, Jamestown-weed) "emigrates with great facility, and often springs up in the ballast of ships, and in earth carried from one country to another." It secretes itself in the hold of vessels and migrates. It

is a sort of cosmopolitan weed, a roving weed. What adventures! What historian knows when first it came into a country! He quotes Beverly's "History of Virginia" as saying that some soldiers in the days of Bacon's rebellion, having eaten some of this plant, which was boiled for salad by mistake, were made natural fools and buffoons by it for eleven days, without injury to their bodies (? ?).

The root of a biennial or perennial will accumulate the virtues of the plant more than any other part.

B. says that Pursh states that the sweet-scented goldenrod (*Solidago odora*) "has for some time [*i. e.* before 1817] [1] been an article of exportation to China, where it fetches a high price." And yet it is known to very few New-Englanders.

"No botanist," says B., "even if in danger of starving in a wilderness, would indulge his hunger on a root or fruit taken from an unknown plant of the natural order *Luridæ*, of the *Multisiliquæ*, or the *umbelliferous aquatics*. On the contrary he would not feel a moment's hesitation in regard to any of the *Gramina*, the fruit of the *Pomaceæ*, and several other natural families of plants, which are known to be uniformly innocent in their effects."

The aromatic flavor of the checkerberry is also perceived in the *Gaultheria hispidula*, in *Spiræa ulmaria* and the root of *Spiræa lobata*, and in the birches.

He says ginseng, spigelia, snake-root, etc., form considerable articles of exportation.

The odor of skunk-cabbage is perceived in some

[1] [Supplied by Thoreau.]

North American currants, as *Ribes rigens* of Michaux on high mountains.

At one time the Indians about Quebec and Montreal were so taken up with searching for ginseng that they could not be hired for any other purpose. It is said that both the Chinese and the Indians named this plant from its resemblance to the figure of a man.[1]

The Indians use the bark of *Dirca palustris*, or leather-wood, for their cordage. It was after the long-continued search of many generations that these qualities were discovered.

Of tobacco (*Nicotiana Tabacum*) B. says, after speaking of its poisonous qualities: "Yet the first person who had courage and patience enough to persevere in its use, until habit had overcome his original disgust, eventually found in it a pleasing sedative, a soother of care, and a material addition to the pleasures of life. Its use, which originated among savages, has spread into every civilized country; it has made its way against the declamations of the learned, and the prohibitions of civil and religious authority, and it now gives rise to an extensive branch of agriculture, or of commerce, in every part of the globe." Soon after its introduction into Europe, "the rich indulged in it as a luxury of the highest kind; and the poor gave themselves up to it, as a solace for the miseries of life." Several varieties are cultivated.

In return for many foreign weeds, we have sent abroad, says B., "the *Erigeron Canadensis* and the prolific families of *Ambrosia* and *Amaranthus*."

[1] Bigelow got this from Kalm. *Vide* extract from Kalm.

"The Indians were acquainted with the medicinal properties of more than one species of Euphorbia."

I noticed the button-bush, May 25th, around an elevated pond or mud-hole, its leaves just beginning to expand. This slight amount of green contrasted with its dark, craggly [*sic*], naked-looking stem and branches — as if subsiding waters had left them bare — looked Dantesque and infernal. It is not a handsome bush at this season, it is so slow to put out its leaves and hide its naked and unsightly stems.

The *Andromeda ligustrina* is late to leave out.

Malus excelsa; amara; florida; palustris; gratissima; ramosa; spinosa; ferruginea; aromatica; aurea; rubiginosa; odorata; tristis; officinalis!! herbacea; vulgaris; æstivalis; autumnalis; riparia; versicolor; communis; farinosa; super septa pendens;[1] *Malus sepium; vinum Novæ-Angliæ; succosa; sæpe formicis præoccupata; vermiculosa aut verminosa aut a vermibus corrupta vel erosa; Malus semper virens et viridis; cholera-morbifera* or *dysenterifera; M. sylvestripaludosa, excelsa et ramosa superne, difficilis conscendere,* (*fructus difficillimus stringere, parvus et durus*); *Cortex picis perforata* or *perterebata; rupestris; agrestis; arvensis; Assabettia;* Railroad Apple; *Musketaquidensis;* Dew Apple (*rorifera*); the apple whose fruit we tasted in our youth which grows *passim et nusquam,* (*Malus cujus fructum ineunte ætate gustavi quæ passim et nusquam viget*); our own particular apple; *Malus numquam legata vel stricta; cortice muscosâ; Malus viæ-ferreæ; sylvatica in sylvis densissimis.*[2]

[1] *Parietes, sepes, sepimenta* [alternatives for *septa*].

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 316; Riv. 388, 389.]

May 30. *Friday.* There was a Concord man once who had a foxhound named Burgoyne. He called him Bug*īne.* A good name.[1]

May 31. *Pedestrium solatium in apricis locis; nodosa.*[2]

[1] [*Walden*, p. 308; Riv. 432.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 316; Riv. 389.]

V

JUNE, 1851

(ÆT. 33)

June 3. *Tuesday.* Lectured in Worcester last Saturday, and walked to *As-* or *Has*nebumskit Hill in Paxton the next day. Said to be the highest land in Worcester County except Wachusett.

Met Mr. Blake, Brown, Chamberlin, Hinsdale, Miss Butman (?), Wyman, Conant.

Returned to Boston yesterday. Conversed with John Downes, who is connected with the Coast Survey, is printing tables for astronomical, geodesic, and other uses. He tells me that he once saw the common sucker in numbers piling up stones as big as his fist (like the piles which I have seen), taking them up or moving them with their mouths.

Dr. Harris suggests that the mountain cranberry which I saw at Ktaadn was the *Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa*, cowberry, because it was edible and not the *Uva-Ursi*, or bear-berry, which we have in Concord.

Saw the *Uvularia perfoliata*, perfoliate bellwort, in Worcester near the hill; an abundance of mountain laurel on the hills, now budded to blossom and the fresh lighter growth contrasting with the dark green; an abundance of very large checkerberries, or partridge-berries, as Bigelow calls them, on Hasnebumskit. Sugar maples about there. A very extensive view, but

the western view not so much wilder as I expected. See Barre, about fifteen miles off, and Rutland, etc., etc. Not so much forest as in our neighborhood; high, swelling hills, but less shade for the walker. The hills are green, the soil springier; and it is written that water is more easily obtained on the hill than in the valleys. Saw a Scotch fir, the pine so valued for tar and naval uses in the north of Europe.

Mr. Chamberlin told me that there was no corporation in Worcester except the banks (which I suspect may not be literally true), and hence their freedom and independence. I think it likely there is a gas company to light the streets at least.

John Mactaggart finds the ice thickest not in the largest lakes in Canada, nor in the smallest, where the surrounding forests melt it. He says that the surveyor of the boundary-line between England and United States on the Columbia River saw pine trees which would require sixteen feet in the blade to a cross-cut saw to do anything with them.

I examined to-day a large swamp white oak in Hubbard's meadow, which was blown down by the same storm which destroyed the lighthouse. At five feet from the ground it was nine and three fourths feet in circumference ; the first branch at eleven and a half feet from ground; and it held its size up to twenty-three feet from the ground. Its whole height, measured on the ground, was eighty feet, and its breadth about sixty-six feet. The roots on one side were turned up with the soil on them, making an object very conspicuous a great distance off, the highest root being eighteen feet from the ground

and fourteen feet above centre of trunk. The roots, which were small and thickly interlaced, were from three to nine inches beneath the surface (in other trees I saw them level with the surface) and thence extended fifteen to eighteen inches in depth (*i. e.* to this depth they occupied the ground). They were broken off at about eleven feet from the centre of the trunk and were there on an average one inch in diameter, the largest being three inches in diameter. The longest root was broken off at twenty feet from the centre, and was there three quarters of an inch in diameter. The tree was rotten within. The lower side of the soil (what was originally the lower), which clothed the roots for nine feet from the centre of the tree, was white and clayey to appearance, and a sparrow was sitting on three eggs within the mass. Directly under where the massive trunk had stood, and within a foot of the surface, you could apparently strike in a spade and meet with no obstruction to a free cultivation. There was no tap-root to be seen. The roots were encircled with dark, nubby rings. The tree, which still had a portion of its roots in the ground and held to them by a sliver on the leeward side, was alive and had leaved out, though on many branches the leaves were shrivelled again. *Quercus bicolor* of Bigelow, *Q. Prinus discolor* Mx. f.

I observed the grass waving to-day for the first time,—the swift Camilla on it. It might have been noticed before. You might have seen it now for a week past on grain-fields.

Clover has blossomed.

I noticed the indigo-weed a week or two ago pushing up like asparagus. Methinks it must be the small andromeda (?), that dull red mass of leaves in the swamp, mixed perchance with the rhodora, with its dry fruit-like appendages, as well as the *Andromeda paniculata*, else called *ligustrina*, and the clethra. It was the golden senecio (*Senecio aureus*) which I plucked a week ago in a meadow in Wayland. The earliest, methinks, of the aster and autumnal-looking yellow flowers. Its bruised stems enchanted me with their indescribable sweet odor, like I cannot think what.

The *Phaseolus vulgaris* includes several kinds of bush beans, of which those I raised were one.

June 6. *Friday.* Gathered last night the strong, rank, penetrating-scented angelica.

Under the head of the *Cicuta maculata*, or American hemlock, — "It is a rule sanctioned by the observations of medical botanists, that umbelliferous plants, which grow in or about the water, are of a poisonous nature." [1] He does not say that the angelica is poisonous, but I suppose that it is. It has such a rank, offensive, and killing odor as makes me think of the ingredients of the witches' cauldron. It did not leave my hands, which had carried it, long after I had washed them. A strong, penetrating, lasting, and sickening odor.

Gathered to-night the *Cicuta maculata*, American hemlock, the veins of the leaflets ending in the notches and the root fasciculated.

[1] [Bigelow, *American Medical Botany*, vol. i.]

Bigelow says, "The leaves of the *Solidago odora* have a delightfully fragrant odor, partaking of that of anise and sassafras, but different from either." [1]

June 7. My practicalness is not to be trusted to the last. To be sure, I go upon my legs for the most part, but, being hard-pushed and dogged by a superficial common sense which is bound to near objects by beaten paths, I am off the handle, as the phrase is, — I begin to be transcendental and show where my heart is. I am like those guinea-fowl which Charles Darwin saw at the Cape de Verd Islands. He says, "They avoided us like partridges on a rainy day in September, running with their heads cocked up; and if pursued, they readily took to the wing." Keep your distance, do not infringe on the interval between us, and I will pick up lime and lay real terrestrial eggs for you, and let you know by cackling when I have done it.

When I have been asked to speak at a temperance meeting, my answer has been, "I am too transcendental to serve you in your way." They would fain confine me to the rum-sellers and rum-drinkers, of whom I am not one, and whom I know little about.

It is a certain faeryland where we live. You may walk out in any direction over the earth's surface, lifting your horizon, and everywhere your path, climbing the convexity of the globe, leads you between heaven and earth, not away from the light of the sun and stars and the habitations of men. I wonder that I ever get five miles on my way, the walk is so crowded with events and

[1] [Bigelow, *American Medical Botany*, vol. i.]

phenomena. How many questions there are which I have not put to the inhabitants!

But how far can you carry *your* practicalness? How far does your knowledge really extend? When I have read in deeds only a hundred years old the words "to enjoy and possess, he and his assigns, *forever*," I have seen how short-sighted is the sense which conducts from day to day. When I read the epitaphs of those who died a century ago, they seem deader even than they expected. A day seems proportionally a long part of your "forever and a day."

There are few so temperate and chaste that they can afford to remind us even at table that they have a palate and a stomach.

We believe that the possibility of the future far exceeds the accomplishment of the past. We review the past with the common sense, but we anticipate the future with transcendental senses. In our sanest moments we find ourselves naturally expecting or prepared for far greater changes than any which we have experienced within the period of distinct memory, only to be paralleled by experiences which are forgotten. Perchance there are revolutions which create an interval impassable to the memory.

With reference to the near past, we all occupy the region of common sense, but in the prospect of the future we are, by instinct, transcendentalists.

We affirm that all things are possible, but only these things have been to our knowledge. I do not even infer the future *from what I know of the past.* I am hardly better acquainted with the past than with the future.

What is new to the individual may be familiar to the experience of his race. It must be rare indeed that the experience of the individual transcends that of his race. It will be perceived that there are two kinds of change, — that of the race, and that of the individual within the limits of the former.

One of those gentle, straight-down rainy days, when the rain begins by spotting the cultivated fields as if shaken from a pepper-box; a fishing day, when I see one neighbor after another, having donned his oil-cloth suit, walking or riding past with a fish-pole, having struck work, — a day and an employment to make philosophers of them all.

When introduced to high life I cannot help perceiving how it is as a thing jumped at, and I find that I do not get on in my enjoyment of the fine arts which adorn it, because my attention is wholly occupied with the jump, remembering that the greatest genuine leap on record, due to human muscles alone, is that of certain wandering Arabs who cleared twenty-five feet on level ground. The first question which I am tempted to put to the proprietor of such great impropriety is, "Who boosts you?" Are you one of the ninety-nine who fail or the hundredth, who succeeds?

June 8. *Sunday.* In F. A. Michaux's, *i. e.* the younger Michaux's, "Voyage à l'ouest des Monts Alléghanys, 1802," printed at Paris, 1808: —

He says the common inquiry in the newly settled

West was, "'From what part of the world have you come?' As if these vast and fertile regions would naturally be the point of union (*réunion*, meeting) and the common country of all the inhabitants of the globe."[1]

The current of the Ohio is so swift in the spring that it is not necessary to row. Indeed rowing would do more harm than good, since it would tend to turn the ark out of the current on to some isle or sand-bar, where it would be entangled amid floating trees. This has determined the form of the bateaux, which are not the best calculated for swiftness but to obey the current. They are from fifteen to fifty feet long by ten to twelve and fifteen, with square ends, and roof of boards like a house at one end. The sides are about four and a half feet above the water. "I was alone on the shore of the Monongahela, when I perceived, for the first time, in the distance, five or six of these bateaux which were descending this river. I could not conceive what those great square boxes were, which, abandoned to the current, presented alternately their ends, their sides, and even (or also (?), *et même*) their angles. As they came nearer, I heard a confused noise but without distinguishing anything, on account of the elevation of the sides. It was only on ascending the bank of the river that I perceived, in these bateaux, many families carrying with them their horses, cows, poultry, dismounted carts (*charrettes*), plows, harnesses, beds, agricultural implements, in short all that constitute the movables of a household (*ménage*) and the carrying

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 221; Riv. 271.]

on (*exploitation*) of a farm." But he was obliged to paddle his log canoe "*sans cesse*" because of the sluggishness of the current of the Ohio in April, 1802.

A Vermonter told him that the expense of clearing land in his State was always defrayed by the potash obtained from the ashes of the trees which were burnt, and sometimes people took land to clear on condition that they should have what potash they could make.

After travelling more than three thousand miles in North America, he says that no part is to be compared for the "*force végétative des forêts*" to the region of the Ohio between Wheeling and Marietta. Thirty-six miles above the last place he measured a plane tree on the bank of the Ohio which, at four feet from the ground, was forty-seven in circumference. It is true it was "*renflé d'une manière prodigieuse.*" Tulip and plane trees, his father had said, attained the greatest diameter of North American trees.

Ginseng was then the only "territorial" production of Kentucky which would pay the expense of transportation *by land* to Philadelphia. They collected it from spring to the first frosts. Even hunters carried for this purpose, beside their guns, a bag and a little "*pioche.*" From twenty-five to thirty "*milliers pesant*" were then transported annually, and this commerce was on the increase. Some transported it themselves from Kentucky to China, *i. e.* without selling it [to] the merchants of the seaboard. Traders in Kentucky gave twenty to twenty-four "sous" the pound for it.

They habituated their wild hogs to return to the house from time to time by distributing corn for them

once or twice a week. So I read that in Buenos Ayres they collect the horses into the corral twice a week to keep them tame in a degree.

Gathered the first strawberries to-day.

Observed on Fair Haven a tall pitch pine, such as some call yellow pine, — very smooth, yellowish, and destitute of branches to a great height. The outer and darker-colored bark appeared to have scaled off, leaving a fresh and smooth surface. At the ground, all round the tree, I saw what appeared to be the edges of the old surface scales, extending to two inches more in thickness. The bark was divided into large, smooth plates, one to two feet long and four to six inches wide.

I noticed that the cellular portion of the bark of the canoe birch log from which I stripped the epidermis a week or two ago was turned a complete brick-red color very striking to behold and reminding me of the red man and all strong, natural things, — the color of our blood somewhat. Under the epidermis it was still a sort of buff. The different colors of the various parts of this bark, at various times, fresh or stale, are extremely agreeable to my eye.

I found the white-pine-top full of staminate blossom-buds not yet fully grown or expanded, with a rich red tint like a tree full of fruit, but I could find no pistillate blossom.

The fugacious-petalled cistus, and the pink, and the lupines of various tints are seen together.

Our outside garments, which are often thin and fanciful and merely for show, are our epidermis, hang-

ing loose and fantastic like that of the yellow birch, which may be cast off without harm, stripped off here and there without fatal injury; sometimes called cuticle and false skin. The vital principle wholly wanting in it; partakes not of the life of the plant. Our thicker and more essential garments are our cellular integument. When this is removed, the tree is said to be girdled and dies. Our shirt is the cortex, liber, or true bark, beneath which is found the alburnum or sap-wood, while the heart in old stocks is commonly rotten or has disappeared. As if we grew like trees, and were of the exogenous kind.

June 9. James Wood, Senior, told me to-day that Asa (?) Melvin's father told him that he had seen alewives caught (many of them) in the meadow which we were crossing, on the west of Bateman's Pond, where now there is no stream, and though it is wet you can walk everywhere; also one shad. He thinks that a great part of the meadow once belonged to the pond.

Gathered the *Linnæa borealis*.

June 11. *Wednesday*. Last night a beautiful summer night, not too warm, moon not quite full, after two or three rainy days. Walked to Fair Haven by railroad, returning by Potter's pasture and Sudbury road. I feared at first that there would be too much white light, like the pale remains of daylight, and not a yellow, gloomy, dreamier light; that it would be like a candlelight by day; but when I got away from the town and deeper into the night, it was better. I hear whip-poor-wills, and see a few fireflies in the meadow.

I saw by the shadows cast by the inequalities of the clayey sand-bank in the Deep Cut that it was necessary to see objects by moonlight as well as sunlight, to get a complete notion of them. This bank had looked much more flat by day, when the light was stronger, but now the heavy shadows revealed its prominences. The prominences are light, made more remarkable by the dark shadows which they cast.

When I rose out of the Deep Cut into the old pigeon-place field, I rose into a warmer stratum of air, it being lighter. It told of the day, of sunny noontide hours, — an air in which work had been done, which men had breathed. It still remembered the sunny banks, — of the laborer wiping his brow, of the bee humming amid flowers, the hum of insects. Here is a puff of warmer air which has taken its station on the hills; which has come up from the sultry plains of noon.[1]

I hear the nighthawks uttering their squeaking notes high in the air now at nine o'clock P. M., and occasionally — what I do not remember to have heard so late — their booming note. It sounds more as if under a cope than by day. The sound is not so fugacious, going off to be lost amid the spheres, but is echoed hollowly to earth, making the low roof of heaven vibrate. Such a sound is more confused and dissipated by day.

The whip-poor-will suggests how wide asunder [are] the woods and the town. Its note is very rarely heard by those who live on the street, and then it is thought to be of ill omen. Only the dwellers on the outskirts of the village hear it occasionally. It sometimes comes

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 328 ; Riv. 403.]

into their yards. But go into the woods in a warm night at this season, and it is the prevailing sound. I hear now five or six at once. It is no more of ill omen therefore here than the night and the moonlight are. It is a bird not only of the woods, but of the night side of the woods.

New beings have usurped the air we breathe, rounding Nature, filling her crevices with sound. To sleep where you may hear the whip-poor-will in your dreams!

I hear from this upland, from which I see Wachusett by day, a wagon crossing one of the bridges. I have no doubt that in some places to-night I should be sure to hear every carriage which crossed a bridge over the river within the limits of Concord, for in such an hour and atmosphere the sense of hearing is wonderfully assisted and asserts a new dignity, and [we] become the Hearalls of the story. The late traveller cannot drive his horse across the distant bridge, but this still and resonant atmosphere tells the tale to my ear. Circumstances are very favorable to the transmission of such a sound. In the first place, planks so placed and struck like a bell swung near the earth emit a very resonant and penetrating sound; add that the bell is, in this instance, hung over water, and that the night air, not only on account of its stillness, but perhaps on account of its density, is more favorable to the transmission of sound. If the whole town were a raised planked floor, what a din there would be!

I hear some whip-poor-wills on hills, others in thick wooded vales, which ring hollow and cavernous, like an apartment or cellar, with their note. As when I hear

the working of some artisan from within an apartment.

I now descend round the corner of the grain-field, through the pitch pine wood into a lower field, more inclosed by woods, and find myself in a colder, damp and misty atmosphere, with much dew on the grass. I seem to be nearer to the origin of things. There is something creative and primal in the cool mist. This dewy mist does not fail to suggest music to me, unaccountably; fertility, the origin of things. An atmosphere which has forgotten the sun, where the ancient principle of moisture prevails. It is laden with the condensed fragrance of plants and, as it were, distilled in dews.

The woodland paths are never seen to such advantage as in a moonlight night, so embowered, still opening before you almost against expectation as you walk; you are so completely in the woods, and yet your feet meet no obstacles. It is as if it were not a path, but an open, winding passage through the bushes, which your feet find.

Now I go by the spring, and when I have risen to the same level as before, find myself in the warm stratum again.

The woods are about as destitute of inhabitants at night as the streets. In both there will be some night-walkers. There are but few wild creatures to seek their prey. The greater part of its inhabitants have retired to rest.

Ah, that life that I have known! How hard it is to remember what is most memorable! We remember

how we itched, not how our hearts beat. I can sometimes recall to mind the quality, the immortality, of my youthful life, but in memory is the only relation to it.

The very cows have now left their pastures and are driven home to their yards. I meet no creature in the fields.

I hear the night-warbler [1] breaking out as in his dreams, made so from the first for some mysterious reason.

Our spiritual side takes a more distinct form, like our shadow which we see accompanying us.

I do not know but I feel less vigor at night; my legs will not carry me so far; as if the night were less favorable to muscular exertion, — weakened us, somewhat as darkness turns plants pale. But perhaps my experience is to be referred to being already exhausted by the day, and I have never tried the experiment fairly. Yet sometimes after a hard day's work I have found myself unexpectedly vigorous. It was so hot summer before last that the Irish laborers on the railroad worked by night instead of day for a while, several of them having been killed by the heat and cold water. I do not know but they did as much work as ever by day. Yet methinks Nature would not smile on such labors.

Only the Hunter's and Harvest moons are famous, but I think that each full moon deserves to be and has its own character well marked. One might be called the Midsummer-Night Moon.

[1] [The first mention in the Journal of a bird the identity of which Thoreau seems never to have made out. See *Journal*, vol. i, Introduction, p. xlvi.]

The wind and water are still awake. At night you are sure to hear what wind there is stirring. The wind blows, the river flows, without resting. There lies Fair Haven Lake, undistinguishable from fallen sky. The pines seem forever foreign, at least to the civilized man, — not only their aspect but their scent, and their turpentine.

So still and moderate is the night! No scream is heard, whether of fear or joy. No great comedy nor tragedy is being enacted. The chirping of crickets is the most universal, if not the loudest, sound. There is no French Revolution in Nature, no excess. She is warmer or colder by a degree or two.

By night no flowers, at least no variety of colors. The pinks are no longer pink; they only shine faintly, reflecting more light. Instead of flowers underfoot, stars overhead.

My shadow has the distinctness of a second person, a certain black companion bordering on the imp, and I ask, "Who is this?" which I see dodging behind me as I am about to sit down on a rock.

No one, to my knowledge, has observed the minute differences in the seasons. Hardly two nights are alike. The rocks do not feel warm to-night, for the air is warmest; nor does the sand particularly. A book of the seasons, each page of which should be written in its own season and out-of-doors, or in its own locality wherever it may be.

When you get into the road, though far from the town, and feel the sand under your feet, it is as if you had reached your own gravel walk. You no longer

hear the whip-poor-will, nor regard your shadow, for here you expect a fellow-traveller. You catch yourself walking merely. The road leads your steps and thoughts alike to the town. You see only the path, and your thoughts wander from the objects which are presented to your senses. You are no longer in place. It is like conformity, — walking in the ways of men.

In Charles Darwin's "Voyage of a Naturalist round the World," commenced in 1831: —

He gave to Ehrenberg some of an impalpably fine dust which filled the air at sea near the Cape de Verd Islands, and he found it to consist in great part of "infusoria with siliceous shields, and of the siliceous tissue of plants;" found in this sixty-seven different organic forms. The infusoria with two exceptions inhabitants of fresh water. Vessels have even run on shore owing to the obscurity. Is seen a thousand miles from Africa. Darwin found particles of stone above a thousandth of an inch square.

Speaking of St. Paul's Rocks, Lat. 58′ N., Long. 29° 15′ W., "Not a single plant, not even a lichen, grows on this islet; yet it is inhabited by several insects and spiders. The following list completes, I believe, the terrestrial fauna: a fly (Olfersia) living on the booby, and a tick which must have come here as a parasite on the birds; a small brown moth, belonging to a genus that feeds on feathers; a beetle (Quedius), and a wood-louse from beneath the dung; and lastly numerous spiders, which I suppose prey on these small attendants and scavengers of the waterfowl. The often-repeated description of the stately palm and other noble tropical

plants, then birds, and lastly man, taking possession of the coral islets as soon as formed, in the Pacific, is probably not quite correct; I fear it destroys the poetry of this story, that feather and dirt-feeding and parasitic insects and spiders should be the first inhabitants of newly-formed oceanic land."

At Bahia or San Salvador, Brazil, took shelter under a tree "so thick that it would never have been penetrated by common English rain," but not so there.

Of a partridge near the mouth of the Plata, "A man on horseback, by riding round and round in a circle, or rather in a spire, so as to approach closer each time, may knock on the head as many as he pleases." Refers to Hearne's Journey, page 383, for "In Arctic North America the Indians catch the Varying Hare by walking spirally round and round it, when on its form: the middle of the day is reckoned the best time, when the sun is high, and the shadow of the hunter not very long."

In the same place, "General Rosas is also a perfect horseman — an accomplishment of no small consequence in a country where an assembled army elected its general by the following trial: A troop of unbroken horses being driven into a corral, were let out through a gateway, above which was a cross-bar: it was agreed whoever should drop from the bar on one of these wild animals, as it rushed out, and should be able, without saddle or bridle, not only to ride it, but also to bring it back to the door of the corral, should be their general. The person who succeeded was accordingly elected, and doubtless made a general fit for such an army. This extraordinary feat has also been performed by Rosas."

Speaks of the Gaucho sharpening his knife on the back of the armadillo before he kills him.

Alcide d'Orbigny, from 1825 to 1833 in South America, now (1846) publishing the results on a scale which places him second to Humboldt among South American travellers.

Hail in Buenos Ayres as large as small apples; killed thirteen deer, beside ostriches, which last also it blinded, etc., etc. Dr. Malcomson told him of hail in India, in 1831, which "much injured the cattle." Stones flat, one ten inches in circumference; passed through windows, making round holes.

A difference in the country about Montevideo and somewhere else attributed to the manuring and grazing of the cattle. Refers to Atwater as saying that the same thing is observed in the prairies of North America, "where coarse grass, between five and six feet high, when grazed by cattle, changes into common pasture land." (*Vide* Atwater's words in Silliman's *North American Journal*, vol. i, p. 117.)

I would like to read Azara's Voyage.

Speaks [1] of the fennel and the cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus*), introduced from Europe, now very common in those parts of South America. The latter occurs now on both sides the Cordilleras across the continent. In Banda Oriental alone "very many (probably several hundred) square miles are covered by one mass of these prickly plants, and are impenetrable by man or beast. Over the undulating plains, where these great beds occur, nothing else can now live. . . . I doubt whether

[1] [That is, Darwin.]

any case is on record of an invasion on so grand a scale of one plant over the aborigines."

Horses first landed at the La Plata in 1535. Now these, with cattle and sheep, have altered the whole aspect of the country, — vegetation, etc. "The wild pig in some parts probably replaces the peccari; packs of wild dogs may be heard howling on the wooded banks of the less frequented streams; and the common cat, altered into a large and fierce animal, inhabits rocky hills."

At sea, eye being six feet above level, horizon is two and four fifths miles distant. "In like manner, the more level the plain, the more nearly does the horizon approach within these narrow limits; and this, in my opinion, entirely destroys that grandeur which one would have imagined that a vast level plain would have possessed."

Darwin found a tooth of a *native horse* contemporary with the mastodon, on the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, though he says there is good evidence against any horse living in America at the time of Columbus. He speaks of their remains being common in North America. Owen has found Darwin's tooth similar to one Lyell brought from the United States, but unlike any other, fossil or living, and named this American horse *Equus curvidens*, from a slight but peculiar curvature in it.

The great table-land of southern Mexico makes the division between North and South America with reference to the migration of animals.

Quotes Captain Owen's "Surveying Voyage" for saying that, at the town of Benguela on the west coast of

Africa in a time of great drought, a number of elephants entered in a body to possess themselves of the wells. After a desperate conflict and the loss of one man, the inhabitants — three thousand — drove them off. During a great drought in India, says Dr. Malcomson, "a hare drank out of a vessel held by the adjutant of the regiment."

The guanacos (wild llama) and other animals of this genus have the habit of dropping their dung from day to day in the same heap. The Peruvian Indians use it for fuel, and are thus aided in collecting it.

Rowing up a stream which takes its rise in a mountain, you meet at last with pebbles which have been washed down from it, when many miles distant. I love to think of this kind of introduction to it.

The only quadruped native to the Falkland Islands is a large wolf-like fox. As far as he is aware, "there is no other instance in any part of the world of so small a mass of broken land, distant from a continent, possessing so large an aboriginal quadruped peculiar to itself."

In the Falkland Isles, where other fuel is scarce, they frequently cook their beef with the bones from which the meat has been scraped. Also they have "a green little bush about the size of common heath, which has the useful property of burning while fresh and green."

Saw a cormorant play with its fishy prey as a cat with a mouse, — eight times let it go and dive after it again.

Seminal propagation produces a more original individual than that by buds, layers, and grafts.

Some inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego having got some putrid whale's blubber in time of famine, "an old man cut off thin slices and muttering over them, broiled them for a minute, and distributed them to the famished party, who during this time preserved a profound silence." This was the only evidence of any religious worship among them. It suggests that even the animals may have something divine in them and akin to revelation, — some inspirations allying them to man as to God.

"Nor is it easy to teach them our superiority except by striking a fatal blow. Like wild beasts, they do not appear to compare numbers; for each individual, if attacked, instead of retiring, will endeavor to dash your brains out with a stone, as certainly as a tiger under similar circumstances would tear you."

"We were well clothed, and though sitting close to the fire, were far from too warm; yet these naked savages, though further off, were observed, to our great surprise, to be streaming with perspiration at undergoing such a roasting." [1]

Ehrenberg examined some of the white paint with which the Fuegians daub themselves, and found it to be composed of infusoria, including fourteen polygastrica, and four phytolitharia, inhabitants of fresh water, all old and known forms! !

Again of the Fuegians: "Simple circumstances — such as the beauty of scarlet cloth or blue beads, the absence of women, our care in washing ourselves — excited their admiration far more than any grand or

[1] [*Walden*, p. 14; Riv. 22.]

complicated object, such as our ship. Bougainville has well remarked concerning these people, that they treat the 'chef-d'œuvres de l'industrie humaine, comme ils traitent les loix de la nature es ses phénomènes.'"

He was informed of a tribe of foot Indians now changing into horse Indians apparently in Patagonia.

"With the exception of a few berries, chiefly of a dwarf arbutus, the natives [*i. e.* of Tierra del Fuego][1] eat no vegetable food besides this fungus" (*Cyttaria Darwinii*). The "only country . . . where a cryptogamic plant affords a staple article of food."

No reptiles in Tierra del Fuego nor in Falkland Islands.

Describes a species of kelp there, — *Macrocystis pyrifera*. "I know few things more surprising than to see this plant growing and flourishing amidst those great breakers of the Western Ocean, which no mass of rock, let it be ever so hard, can long resist. . . . A few [stems][2] taken together are sufficiently strong to support the weight of the large loose stones to which, in the inland channels, they grow attached; and yet some of these stones were so heavy that, when drawn to the surface, they could scarcely be lifted into a boat by one person." Captain Cook thought that some of it grew to the length of three hundred and sixty feet. "The beds of this sea-weed, even when not of great breadth," says D., "make excellent natural floating breakwaters. It is quite curious to see, in an exposed

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

[2] [The word is supplied by Thoreau.]

harbor, how soon the waves from the open sea, as they travel through the straggling stems, sink in height, and pass into smooth water."

Number of living creatures of all orders whose existence seems to depend on the kelp; a volume might be written on them. If a forest were destroyed anywhere, so many species would not perish as if this weed were, and with the fish would go many birds and larger marine animals, and hence the Fuegian himself perchance.

Tree ferns in Van Diemen's Land (lat. 45°) six feet in circumference.

Missionaries encountered icebergs in Patagonia in latitude corresponding to the Lake of Geneva, in a season corresponding to June in Europe. In Europe, the most southern glacier which comes down to the sea is on coast of Norway, latitude 67°, — 20°, or 1230 [geographical miles] nearer the pole.

Erratic boulders not observed in the intertropical parts of the world; due to icebergs or glaciers.

Under soil perpetually frozen in North America in 56° at three feet; in Siberia in 62° at twelve to fifteen feet.

In an excursion from Valparaiso to the base of the Andes: "We unsaddled our horses near the spring, and prepared to pass the night. The evening was fine, and the atmosphere so clear that the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although no less than twenty-six geographical miles distant, could be distinguished clearly as little black streaks." Anson had been surprised at the distance at which his vessels

were discovered from the coast without knowing the reason, — the great height of the land and the transparency of the air.

Floating islands from four to six feet thick in Lake Tagua-tagua in central Chile; blown about.

June 12. Listen to music religiously, as if it were the last strain you might hear.[1]

There would be this advantage in travelling in your own country, even in your own neighborhood, that you would be so thoroughly prepared to understand what you saw you would make fewer travellers' mistakes.

Is not he hospitable who entertains thoughts?

June 13. Walked to Walden last night (moon not quite full) by railroad and upland wood-path, returning by Wayland road. Last full moon the elms had not leaved out, — cast no heavy shadows, — and their outlines were less striking and rich in the streets at night.

I noticed night before night before last from Fair Haven how valuable was some water by moonlight, like the river and Fair Haven Pond, though far away, reflecting the light with a faint glimmering sheen, as in the spring of the year. The water shines with an inward light like a heaven on earth. The silent depth and serenity and majesty of water! Strange that men should distinguish gold and diamonds, when these precious elements are so common. I saw a distant river by moonlight, making no noise, yet flowing, as by day, still to the sea, like melted silver reflecting the moon-

[1] [Channing, p. 78.]

light. Far away it lay encircling the earth. How far away it may look in the night, and even from a low hill how miles away down in the valley! As far off as paradise and the delectable country! There is a certain glory attends on water by night. By it the heavens are related to the earth, undistinguishable from a sky beneath you. And I forgot to say that after I reached the road by Potter's bars, — or further, by Potter's Brook, — I saw the moon suddenly reflected full from a pool. A puddle from which you may see the moon reflected, and the earth dissolved under your feet. The magical moon with attendant stars suddenly looking up with mild lustre from a window in the dark earth.

I observed also the same night a halo about my shadow in the moonlight, which I referred to the accidentally lighter color of the surrounding surface; I transferred my shadow to the darkest patches of grass, and saw the halo there equally. It serves to make the outlines of the shadow more distinct.

But now for last night. A few fireflies in the meadow. Do they shine, though invisibly, by day? Is their candle lighted by day? It is not nightfall till the whip-poor-wills begin to sing.

As I entered the Deep Cut, I was affected by beholding the first faint reflection of genuine and unmixed moonlight on the eastern sand-bank while the horizon, yet red with day, was tingeing the western side. What an interval between those two lights! The light of the moon, — in what age of the world does that fall upon the earth? The moonlight was as the earliest and dewy morning light, and the daylight tinge reminded me

much more of the night. There were the old and new dynasties opposed, contrasted, and an interval between, which time could not span. Then is night, when the daylight yields to the nightlight. It suggested an interval, a distance not recognized in history. Nations have flourished in that light.

When I had climbed the sand-bank on the left, I felt the warmer current or stratum of air on my cheek, like a blast from a furnace.

The white stems of the pines, which reflected the weak light, standing thick and close together while their lower branches were gone, reminded me that the pines are only larger grasses which rise to a chaffy head, and we the insects that crawl between them. They are particularly grass-like.

How long do the gales retain the heat of the sun? I find them retreated high up the sides of hills, especially on open fields or cleared places. Does, perchance, any of this pregnant air survive the dews of night? Can any of it be found remembering the sun of yesterday even in the morning hours. Does, perchance, some puff, some blast, survive the night on elevated clearings surrounded by the forest?

The bullfrog belongs to summer. The different frogs mark the seasons pretty well, — the peeping hyla, the dreaming frog,[1] and the bullfrog. I believe that all may be heard at last occasionally together.

I heard partridges drumming to-night as late as 9 o'clock. What singularly space penetrating and filling sound! Why am I never nearer to its source?

[1] Toad.

We do not commonly live our life out and full; we do not fill all our pores with our blood; we do not inspire and expire fully and entirely enough, so that the wave, the comber, of each inspiration shall break upon our extremest shores, rolling till it meets the sand which bounds us, and the sound of the surf come back to us. Might not a bellows assist us to breathe? That our breathing should create a wind in a calm day! We live but a fraction of our life. Why do we not let on the flood, raise the gates, and set all our wheels in motion? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Employ your senses.

The newspapers tell us of news not to be named even with that in its own kind which an observing man can pick up in a solitary walk, as if it gained some importance and dignity by its publicness. Do we need to be advertised each day that such is still the routine of life? [1]

The tree-toad's, too, is a summer sound.

I hear, just as the night sets in, faint notes from time to time from some sparrow (?) falling asleep, — a vesper hymn, — and later, in the woods, the chuckling, rattling sound of some unseen bird on the near trees. The nighthawk booms wide awake.

By moonlight we see not distinctly even the surface of the earth, but our daylight experience supplies us with confidence.

As I approached the pond down Hubbard's Path, after coming out of the woods into a warmer air, I saw the shimmering of the moon on its surface, and, in the

[1] [See *Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 471, 472; *Misc.*, Riv. 274.]

near, now flooded cove, the water-bugs, darting, circling about, made streaks or curves of light. The moon's inverted pyramid of shimmering light commenced about twenty rods off, like so much micaceous sand. But I was startled to see midway in the dark water a bright flamelike, more than phosphorescent light crowning the crests of the wavelets, which at first I mistook for fireflies, and thought even of cucullos.[1] It had the appearance of a pure, smokeless flame a half-dozen inches long, issuing from the water and bending flickeringly along its surface. I thought of St. Elmo's lights and the like. But, coming near to the shore of the pond itself, these flames increased, and I saw that even this was so many broken reflections of the moon's disk, though one would have said they were of an intenser light than the moon herself; from contrast with the surrounding water they were. Standing up close to the shore and nearer the rippled surface, I saw the reflections of the moon sliding down the watery concave like so many lustrous burnished coins poured from a bag with inexhaustible lavishness, and the lambent flames on the surface were much multiplied, seeming to slide along a few inches with each wave before they were extinguished; and I saw how farther and farther off they gradually merged in the general sheen, which, in fact, was made up of a myriad little mirrors reflecting the disk of the moon with equal brightness to an eye rightly placed. The pyramid or sheaf of light which we see springing from near where we stand only, in fact, is the outline of that portion of the shimmering surface which

[1] [Otherwise spelled "cucuyo," a West Indian firefly.]

an eye takes in. To myriad eyes suitably placed, the whole surface of the pond would be seen to shimmer, or rather it would be seen, as the waves turned up their mirrors, to be covered with those bright flame-like reflections of the moon's disk, like a myriad candles everywhere issuing from the waves; *i. e.* if there were as many eyes as angles presented by the waves, the whole surface would appear as bright as the moon; and these reflections are dispersed in all directions into the atmosphere, flooding it with light. No wonder that water reveals itself so far by night; even further in many states of the atmosphere than by day. I thought at first it [was] some unusual phosphorescence. In some positions these flames were star-like points, brighter than the brightest stars. Suddenly a flame would show itself in a near and dark space, precisely like some inflammable gas on the surface, — as if an inflammable gas made its way up from the bottom.

I heard my old musical, simple-noted owl. The sound of the *dreaming* frogs[1] prevails over the others. Occasionally a bullfrog near me made an obscene noise, a sound like an eructation, near me. I think they must be imbodied eructations. They suggest flatulency.

The pond is higher than ever, so as to hinder fishermen, and I could hardly get to the true shore here on account of the bushes. I pushed out in a boat a little and heard the chopping of the waves under its bow. And on the bottom I saw the moving reflections of the shining waves, faint streaks of light revealing the shadows of the waves or the opaqueness of the water.

[1] [Toads. See p. 250.]

As I climbed the hill again toward my old bean-field, I listened to the ancient, familiar, immortal, dear cricket sound under all others, hearing at first some distinct chirps; but when these ceased I was aware of the general earth-song, which my hearing had not heard, amid which these were only taller flowers in a bed, and I wondered if behind or beneath this there was not some other chant yet more universal. Why do we not hear when this begins in the spring? and when it ceases in the fall? Or is it too gradual?

After I have got into the road I have no thought to record all the way home, — the walk is comparatively barren. The leafy elm sprays seem to droop more by night (??).

June 14. *Saturday.* Full moon last night. Set out on a walk to Conantum at 7 P. M. A serene evening, the sun going down behind clouds, a few white or slightly shaded piles of clouds floating in the eastern sky, but a broad, clear, mellow cope left for the moon to rise into. An evening for poets to describe. Met a man driving home his cow from pasture and stopping to chat with his neighbor; then a boy, who had set down his pail in the road to stone a bird most perseveringly, whom I heard afterward behind me telling his pail to be quiet in a tone of assumed anger, because it squeaked under his arm. As I proceed along the back road I hear the lark still singing in the meadow, and the bobolink, and the gold robin on the elms, and the swallows twittering about the barns. A small bird chasing a crow high in the air, who is going home at night. All nature is in an

expectant attitude. Before Goodwin's house, at the opening of the Sudbury road, the swallows are diving at a tortoise-shell cat, who curvets and frisks rather awkwardly, as if she did not know whether to be scared or not. And now, having proceeded a little way down this road, the sun having buried himself in the low cloud in the west and hung out his crimson curtains,[1] I hear, while sitting by the wall, the sound of the stake-driver at a distance, — like that made by a man pumping in a neighboring farmyard, watering his cattle, or like chopping wood before his door on a frosty morning,[2] and I can imagine like driving a stake in a meadow. The pumper. I immediately went in search of the bird, but, after going a third of a mile, it did not sound much nearer, and the two parts of the sound did not appear to proceed from the same place. What is the peculiarity of these sounds which penetrate so far on the keynote of nature? At last I got near to the brook in the meadow behind Hubbard's wood, but I could not tell if [it] were further or nearer than that. When I got within half a dozen rods of the brook, it ceased, and I heard it no more. I suppose that I scared it. As before I was further off than I thought, so now I was nearer than I thought. It is not easy to understand how so small a creature can make so loud a sound by merely sucking in or throwing out water with pump-like lungs.[3] As

[1] How quietly we entertain the possibility of joy, of recreation, of light into [*sic*] our souls! We should be more excited at the pulling of a tooth.

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 111; Riv. 137.]

[3] [No water is used in producing the sound. Thoreau had been misinformed by one of his neighbors. See *Excursions*, p. 111; Riv. 137.]

yet no moon, but downy piles of cloud scattered here and there in the expectant sky.

Saw a blue flag blossom in the meadow while waiting for the stake-driver.

It was a sound as of gulping water.

Where my path crosses the brook in the meadow there is a singularly sweet scent in the heavy air bathing the brakes, where the brakes grow, — the fragrance of the earth, as if the dew were a distillation of the fragrant essences of nature. When I reach the road, the farmer going home from town invites me to ride in his high-set wagon, not thinking why I walk, nor can I shortly explain. He remarks on the coolness of the weather. The angelica is budded, a handsome luxuriant plant. And now my senses are captivated again by a sweet fragrance as I enter the embowered willow causeway, and I know not if it be from a particular plant or all together, — sweet-scented vernal grass or sweet-briar. Now the sun is fairly gone, I hear the dreaming frog,[1] and the whip-poor-will from some *darker* wood, — it is not far from eight, — and the cuckoo. The song sparrows sing quite briskly among the willows, as if it were spring again, and the blackbird's harsher note resounds over the meadows, and the veery's comes up from the wood. Fishes are dimpling the surface of the river, seizing the insects which alight. A solitary fisherman in his boat inhabits the scene. As I rose the hill beyond the bridge, I found myself in a cool, fragrant, dewy, up-country, mountain morning air, a new region. (When I had issued from the willows on to the bridge,

[1] Toad?

it was like coming out of night into twilight, the river reflected so much light.) The moon was now seen rising over Fair Haven and at the same time reflected in the river, pale and white like a silvery cloud, barred with a cloud, not promising how it will shine anon. Now I meet an acquaintance coming from a remote field in his hay-rigging, with a jag of wood; who reins up to show me how large a woodchuck he has killed, which he found eating his clover. But now he must drive on, for behind comes a boy taking up the whole road with a huge roller drawn by a horse, which goes lumbering and bouncing along, getting out of the way of night, — while the sun has gone the other way, — and making such a noise as if it had the contents of a tinker's shop in its bowels, and rolls the whole road smooth like a newly sown grain-field.

In Conant's orchard I hear the faint cricket-like song of a sparrow saying its vespers, as if it were a link between the cricket and the bird. The robin sings now, though the moon shines silverly, and the veery jingles its trill. I hear the fresh and refreshing sound of falling water, as I have heard it in New Hampshire. It is a sound we do not commonly hear. I see that the whiteweed is in blossom, which, as I had not walked by day for some time, I had not seen before.

How moderate, deliberate, is Nature! How gradually the shades of night gather and deepen, giving man ample leisure to bid farewell to-day, conclude his day's affairs, and prepare for slumber! The twilight seems out of proportion to the length of the day. Perchance it

saves our eyes. Now for some hours the farmers have been getting home.

Since the alarm about mad dogs a couple of years ago there are comparatively few left to bark at the traveller and bay the moon. All nature is abandoned to me.

You feel yourself — your body, your legs, — more at night, for there is less beside to be distinctly known, and hence perhaps you think yourself more tired than you are. I see indistinctly oxen asleep in the fields, silent in majestic slumber, like the sphinx, — statuesque, Egyptian, reclining. What solid rest! How their heads are supported! A sparrow or a cricket makes more noise. From Conant's summit I hear as many as fifteen whip-poor-wills — or whip-or-I-wills — at once, the succeeding cluck sounding strangely foreign, like a hewer at work elsewhere.

The moon is accumulating yellow light and triumphing over the clouds, but still the west is suffused here and there with a slight red tinge, marking the path of the day. Though inexperienced ones might call it night, it is not yet. Dark, heavy clouds lie along the western horizon, exhibiting the forms of animals and men, while the moon is behind a cloud. Why do we detect these forms so readily? — whales or giants reclining, busts of heroes, Michael-Angelic. There is the gallery of statuary, the picture gallery of man, — not a board upon an Italian's head, but these dark figures along the horizon, — the board some Titan carries on his head. What firm and heavy outlines for such soft and light material!

How sweet and encouraging it is to hear the sound of some artificial music from the midst of woods or from the top of a hill at night, borne on the breeze from some distant farmhouse, — the human voice or a flute! That is a civilization one can endure, worth having. I could go about the world listening for the strains of music. Men use this gift but sparingly, methinks. What should we think of a bird which had the gift of song but used it only once in a dozen years, like the tree which blossoms only once in a century?

Now the dorbug comes humming by, the first I have heard this year. In three months it will be the Harvest Moon. I cannot easily believe it. Why not call this the Traveller's Moon? It would be as true to call the last (the May) the Planter's Moon as it is to call September's the Harvest Moon, for the farmers use one about as little as the other. Perhaps this is the Whip-poor-will's Moon. The bullfrog now, which I have not heard before, this evening. It is nearly nine. They are much less common and their note more intermittent than that of the dreamers. I scared up a bird on a *low* bush, perchance on its nest. It is rare that you start them at night from such places.

Peabody says that the nighthawk retires to rest about the time the whip-poor-will begins its song. The whip-poor-will begins now at 7.30. I hear the nighthawk after 9 o'clock. He says it flies low in the evening, but it also flies high, as it must needs do to make the booming sound.

I hear the lowing of cows occasionally, and the barking of dogs. The pond by moonlight, which may make

the object in a walk, suggests little to be said. Where there was only one firefly in a dozen rods, I hastily ran to one which had crawled up to the top of a grass-head and exhibited its light, and instantly another sailed in to it, showing its light also; but my presence made them extinguish their lights. The latter retreated, and the former crawled slowly down the stem. It appeared to me that the first was a female who thus revealed her place to the male, who was also making known his neighborhood as he hovered about, both showing their lights that they might come together. It was like a mistress who had climbed to the turrets of her castle and exhibited there a blazing taper for a signal, while her lover had displayed his light on the plain. If perchance she might have any lovers abroad.

Not much before 10 o'clock does the moonlight night begin. When man is asleep and day fairly forgotten, then is the beauty of moonlight seen over lonely pastures where cattle are silently feeding.[1] Then let me walk in a diversified country, of hill and dale, with heavy woods one side, and copses and scattered trees and bushes enough to give me shadows. Returning, a mist is on the river. The river is taken into the womb of Nature again.

Now is the clover month, but haying is not yet begun.

Evening. — Went to Nawshawtuct by North Branch.

Overtaken by a slight shower. The same increased fragrance from the ground — sweet-fern, etc. — as in the night, and for the like reason probably. The houstonias

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 326 ; Riv. 401.]

still blossom freshly, as I believe they continue to do all summer. The fever-root in blossom; pictured in Bigelow's "Medical Botany." *Triosteum perfoliatum*, near the top of Hill, under the wall, looks somewhat like a milkweed. The *Viburnum dentatum*, very regularly toothed, just ready to blossom; sometimes called arrow-wood.

Nature seems not [to] have designed that man should be much abroad by night, and in the moon proportioned the light fitly. By the faintness and rareness of the light compared with that of the sun, she expresses her intention with regard to him.

June 15. *Sunday.* Darwin still: —

Finds runaway sailors on the Chonos Archipelago, who he thought "had kept a very good reckoning of time," having lost only four days in fifteen months.

Near same place, on the islands of the archipelago, he found wild potato, the tallest four feet high, tubers generally small but one two inches in diameter; "resembled in every respect, and had the same smell as English potatoes; but when boiled they shrunk much, and were watery and insipid, without any bitter taste."

Speaking of the surf on the coast of Chiloe, "I was assured that, after a heavy gale, the roar can be heard at night even at Castro, a distance of no less than twenty-one sea-miles, across a hilly and wooded country."

Subsidence and elevation of the west coast of South America and of the Cordilleras. "Daily it is forced home on the mind of the geologist, that nothing, not

even the wind that blows, is so unstable as the level of the crust of this earth."

Would like to see Sir Francis Head's travels in South America, — Pampas perhaps.[1] Also Chambers' "Sea Levels." Also travels of Spix and Von Martius.

It is said that hydrophobia was first known in South America in 1803.

At the Galapagos, the tortoises going to any place travel night and day and so get there sooner than would be expected, — about eight miles in two or three days. He rode on their backs.

The productions of the Galapagos Archipelago, from five to six hundred miles from America, are still of the American type. "It was most striking to be surrounded by new birds, new reptiles, new shells, new insects, new plants, and yet, by innumerable trifling details of structure, and even by the tones of voice and plumage of the birds, to have the temperate plains of Patagonia, or the hot, dry deserts of Northern Chile, vividly brought before my eyes." What is most singular, not only are the plants, etc., to a great extent peculiar to these islands, but each for the most part has its own kinds, though they are within sight of each other.

Birds so tame that they can be killed with a stick. *I* would suggest that, from having dealt so long with the inoffensive and slow-moulded tortoise, they have not yet acquired an instinctive fear of man, who is a newcomer. Methinks tortoises, lizards, etc., for wild creatures are remarkable for the nearness to which man approaches them and handles them, as logs, — cold-

[1] [*Rough Notes of Journeys in the Pampas and Andes.*]

blooded, lumpish forms of life, — only taking care not to step into their mouths. An alligator has been known to have come out of the mud like a mud volcano where was now the floor of a native's hut.

"The common dock is . . . widely disseminated, [in New Zealand] [1] and will, I fear, forever remain a proof of the rascality of an Englishman, who sold the seeds for those of the tobacco plant."

The New-Hollanders a little higher in the scale of civilization than the Fuegians.

Puzzled by a "well rounded fragment of greenstone, rather larger than a man's head," which a captain had found on a small coral circle or atoll near Keeling Island, "where every other particle of matter is calcareous," about six hundred miles from Sumatra. D. agrees with Kotzebue (*vide* Kotzebue) who states that (Darwin's words) "the inhabitants of the Radack Archipelago, a group of lagoon-islands in the midst of the Pacific, obtained stones for sharpening their instruments by searching the roots of trees which are cast upon the beach," and "laws have been established that such stones belong to the chief, and a punishment is inflicted on any one who attempts to steal them." Let geologists look out. "Some natives carried by Kotzebue to Kamtschatka collected stones to take back to their country."

Found no bottom at 7200 feet, and 2200 yards from shore of Keeling Island, a coral isle.

His theory of the formation of coral isles by the subsidence of the land appears probable. He concludes

[1] [Supplied by Thoreau.]

that "the great continents are, for the most part, rising areas; and . . . the central parts of the great oceans are sinking areas."

Not a *private* person on the island of Ascension; the inhabitants are paid and victualled by the British government. Springs, cisterns, etc., are managed by the same. "Indeed, the whole island may be compared to a huge ship kept in first-rate order."

Vide "Circumnavigation of Globe up to Cook."

Vide "Voyages Round the World since Cook."

The author of the article on Orchids in the *Eclectic* says that "a single plant produced three different flowers of genera previously supposed to be quite distinct."

Saw the first wild rose to-day on the west side of the railroad causeway. The whiteweed has suddenly appeared, and the clover gives whole fields a rich and florid appearance, — the rich red and the sweet-scented white. The fields are blushing with the red species as the western sky at evening. The blue-eyed grass, well named, looks up to heaven. And the yarrow, with its persistent dry stalks and heads, is now ready to blossom again. The dry stems and heads of last year's tansy stand high above the new green leaves.

I sit in the shade of the pines to hear a wood thrush at noon. The ground smells of dry leaves; the heat is oppressive. The bird begins on a low strain, *i. e.* it first delivers a strain on a lower key, then a moment after another a little higher, then another still varied from the others, — no two successive strains alike, but

either ascending or descending. He confines himself to his few notes, in which he is unrivalled, as if his kind had learned this and no more anciently.

I perceive, as formerly, a white froth dripping from the pitch pines, just at the base of the new shoots. It has no taste. The pollywogs in the pond are now full-tailed. The hickory leaves are blackened by a recent frost, which reminds me that this is near their northern limit.

It is remarkable the rapidity with which the grass grows. The 25th of May I walked to the hills in Wayland, and when I returned across lots do not remember that I had much occasion to think of the grass, or to go round any fields to avoid treading on it; but just a week afterward, at Worcester, it was high and waving in the fields, and I was to some extent confined to the road; and the same was the case here. Apparently in one month you get from fields which you can cross without hesitation, to haying time. It has grown you hardly know when, be the weather what it may, sunshine or storm. I start up a solitary woodcock in the shade, in some copse; goes off with a startled, rattling, hurried note.

After walking by night several times I now walk by day, but I am not aware of any crowning advantage in it. I see small objects better, but it does not enlighten me any. The day is more trivial.

What a careful gardener Nature is! She does not let the sun come out suddenly with all his intensity after rain and cloudy weather, but graduates the change to suit the tenderness of plants.

I see the tall crowfoot now in the meadows (*Ranunculus acris*), with a smooth stem. I do not notice the *bulbosus*, which was so common a fortnight ago. The rose-colored flowers of the *Kalmia angustifolia*, lambkill, just opened and opening. The *Convallaria bifolia* growing stale in the woods. The *Hieracium venosum*, veiny-leaved hawkweed, with its yellow blossoms in the woodland path. The *Hypoxis erecta*, yellow Bethlehem-star, where there is a thick, wiry grass in open paths; should be called yellow-eyed grass, methinks. The *Pyrola asarifolia*, with its pagoda-like stem of flowers, *i. e.* broad-leaved wintergreen. The *Trientalis Americana*, like last, in the woods, with its star-like white flower and pointed whorled leaves. The prunella too is in blossom, and the rather delicate *Thesium umbellatum*, a white flower. The Solomon's-seal, with a greenish drooping raceme of flowers at the top, I do not identify.

I notice to-day the same remarkable bushy growth on the fir (in Wheildon's garden) that I have noticed on the pines and cedars. The leaves are not so thickly set and are much stiffer.

I find that I postpone all actual intercourse with my friends to a certain real intercourse which takes place commonly when we are actually at a distance from one another.

June 22. Sunday. Is the shrub with yellow blossoms which I found last week near the Lincoln road while surveying for E. Hosmer and thought to be *Xylosteum ciliatum*, or fly honeysuckle, the same

with the yellow diervilla which I find in Laurel Glen to-day?

The birch is the surveyor's tree. It makes the best stakes to look at through the sights of a compass, except when there is snow on the ground. Their white bark was not made in vain. In surveying wood-lots I have frequent occasion to say this is what they were made for.

I see that Dugan has trimmed off and peeled the limbs of the willows on the Turnpike to sell at the Acton powder-mill. I believe they get eight dollars a cord for this wood.

I. Hapgood of Acton got me last Friday to compare the level of his cellar-bottom with his garden, for, as he says, when Robbins & Wetherbee keep the water of Nashoba Brook back so as to flood his garden, it comes into his cellar. I found that part of the garden five inches lower than the cellar-bottom. Men are affected in various ways by the actions of others. If a man far away builds a dam, I have water in my cellar. He said that the water was sometimes a foot deep in the garden.

We are enabled to criticise others only when we are different from, and in a given particular superior to, them ourselves. By our aloofness from men and their affairs we are enabled to overlook and criticise them. There are but few men who stand on the hills by the roadside. I am sane only when I have risen above my common sense, when I do not take the foolish view of things which is commonly taken, when I do not live for the low ends for which men commonly live. Wisdom is not common. To what purpose have I senses, if I

am thus absorbed in affairs? My pulse must beat with Nature. After a hard day's work without a thought, turning my very brain into a mere tool, only in the quiet of evening do I so far recover my senses as to hear the cricket, which in fact has been chirping all day. In my better hours I am conscious of the influx of a serene and unquestionable wisdom which partly unfits, and if I yielded to it more rememberingly would wholly unfit me, for what is called the active business of life, for that furnishes nothing on which the eye of reason can rest. What is that other kind of life to which I am thus continually allured? which alone I love? Is it a life for this world? Can a man feed and clothe himself gloriously who keeps only the truth steadily before him? who calls in no evil to his aid? Are there duties which necessarily interfere with the serene perception of truth? Are our serene moments mere foretastes of heaven, — joys gratuitously vouchsafed to us as a consolation, — or simply a transient realization of what might be the whole tenor of our lives?

To be calm, to be serene! There is the calmness of the lake when there is not a breath of wind; there is the calmness of a stagnant ditch. So is it with us. Sometimes we are clarified and calmed healthily, as we never were before in our lives, not by an opiate, but by some unconscious obedience to the all-just laws, so that we become like a still lake of purest crystal and without an effort our depths are revealed to ourselves. All the world goes by us and is reflected in our deeps. Such clarity! obtained by such pure means! by simple living, by honesty of purpose. We live and

rejoice. I awoke into a music which no one about me heard. Whom shall I thank for it? The luxury of wisdom! the luxury of virtue! Are there any intemperate in these things? I feel my Maker blessing me. To the sane man the world is a musical instrument. The very touch affords an exquisite pleasure.

As I walk the railroad causeway, I notice that the fields and meadows have acquired various tinges as the season advances, the sun gradually using all his paints. There is the rosaceous evening red tinge of red clover, — like an evening sky gone down upon the grass, — the whiteweed tinge, the white clover tinge, which reminds me how sweet it smells. The tall buttercup stars the meadow on another side, telling of the wealth of dairies. The blue-eyed grass, so beautiful near at hand, imparts a kind of slate or clay blue tinge to the meads.

It is hot noon. The white pines are covered with froth at the base of the new shoots, as I noticed the pitch pines were a week ago; as if they perspired. I am threading an open pitch and white pine wood, easily traversed, where the pine-needles redden all the ground, which is as smooth as a carpet. Still the blackberries love to creep over this floor, for it is not many years since this was a blackberry-field. And I hear around me, but never in sight, the many wood thrushes whetting their steel-like notes. Such keen singers! It takes a fiery heat, many dry pine leaves added to the furnace of the sun, to temper their strains! Always they are either rising or falling to a new strain. After what a moderate pause they deliver themselves again! saying ever a new thing, avoiding repetition, methinks answering one

another. While most other birds take their siesta, the wood thrush discharges his song. It is delivered like a bolas, or a piece of jingling steel.

The domestic ox has his horns tipped with brass. This and his shoes are the badges of servitude which he wears; as if he would soon get to jacket and trousers. I am singularly affected when I look over a herd of reclining oxen in their pasture, and find that every one has these brazen balls on his horns. They are partly humanized so. It is not pure brute; there is art added. Where are these balls sold? Who is their maker? The bull has a ring in his nose.

The *Lysimachia quadrifolia* exhibits its small yellow blossoms now in the wood-path. Butter-and-eggs has blossomed. The *Uvularia vulgaris*, or bladderwort, a yellow pea-like flower, has blossomed in stagnant pools.

June 23. It is a pleasant sound to me, the squeaking and the booming of nighthawks flying over high open fields in the woods. They fly like butterflies, not to avoid birds of prey but, apparently, to secure their own insect prey. There is a particular part of the railroad just below the shanty where they may be heard and seen in greatest numbers. But often you must look a long while before you can detect the mote in the sky from which the note proceeds.

The common cinquefoil (*Potentilla simplex*) greets me with its simple and unobtrusive yellow flower in the grass. The *P. argentea*, hoary cinquefoil, also is now in blossom. *P. sarmentosa*, running cinquefoil, we had common enough in the spring.

June 26. *Thursday.* The slight reddish-topped grass (red-top?) now gives a reddish tinge to some fields, like sorrel.

Visited a menagerie this afternoon. I am always surprised to see the same spots and stripes on wild beasts from Africa and Asia and also from South America, — on the Brazilian tiger and the African leopard, — and their general similarity. All these wild animals — lions, tigers, chetas, leopards, etc. — have one hue, — tawny and commonly spotted or striped, — what you may call pard-color, a color and marking which I had not associated with America. These are wild beasts. What constitutes the difference between a wild beast and a tame one? How much more human the one than the other! Growling, scratching, roaring, with whatever beauty and gracefulness, still untamable, this royal Bengal tiger or this leopard. They have the character and the importance of another order of men. The majestic lion, the king of beasts, — he must retain his title.

I was struck by the gem-like, changeable, greenish reflections from the eyes of the grizzly bear, so glassy that you never saw the surface of the eye. They [were] quite demonic. Its claws, though extremely large and long, look weak and made for digging or pawing the earth and leaves. It is unavoidable, the idea of transmigration; not merely a fancy of the poets, but an instinct of the race.

June 29. There is a great deal of white clover this year. In many fields where there has been no clover seed

sown for many years at least, it is more abundant than the red, and the heads are nearly as large. Also pastures which are close cropped, and where I think there was little or no clover last year, are spotted white with a humbler growth. And everywhere, by roadsides, garden borders, etc., even where the sward is trodden hard, the small white heads on short stems are sprinkled everywhere. As this is the season for the swarming of bees, and this clover is very attractive to them, it is probably the more difficult to secure them; at any rate it is the more important to secure their services now that they can make honey so fast. It is an interesting inquiry why this year is so favorable to the growth of clover!

I am interested to observe how old-country methods of farming resources are introduced among us. The Irish laborer, for instance, seeing that his employer is contemplating some agricultural enterprise, as ditching or fencing, suggests some old-country mode with [which] he has been familiar from a boy, which is often found to be cheaper as well as more ornamental than the common; and Patrick is allowed to accomplish the object his own way, and for once exhibits some skill and has not to be shown, but, working with a will as well as with pride, does better than ever in the old country. Even the Irishman exhibits what might be mistaken for a Yankee knack, exercising a merely inbred skill derived from the long teachings and practice of his ancestors.

I saw an Irishman building a bank of sod where his employer had contemplated building a bank wall, pil-

ing up very neatly and solidly with his spade and a line the sods taken from the rear, and coping the face at a very small angle from the perpendicular, intermingling the sods with bushes as they came to hand, which would grow and strengthen the whole. It was much more agreeable to the eye, as well as less expensive, than stone would have been, and he thought that it would be equally effective as a fence and no less durable. But it is true only experience will show when the same practice may be followed in this climate and in Ireland, — whether our atmosphere is not too dry to admit of it. At any rate it was wise in the farmer thus to avail himself of any peculiar experience which his hired laborer possessed. That was what he *should* buy.

Also I noticed the other day where one who raises seeds, when his ropes and poles failed, had used ropes twisted of straw to support his plants, — a resource probably suggested and supplied by his foreign laborers. It is only remarkable that so few improvements or resources are or are to be adopted from the Old World.

I look down on rays of prunella by the roadsides now. The panicled or privet andromeda with its fruit-like white flowers. Swamp-pink I see for the first time this season.

The tree-primrose (scabish) [1] (*Œnother biennais*), a rather coarse yellow flower with a long tubular calyx,

[1] [Bigelow, in his *Florula Bostoniensis*, says of this plant, now generally called the evening-primrose, "In the country it is vulgarly known by the name of *Scabish*, a corruption probably of *Scabious*, from which however it is a very different plant." Josselyn gives a quaint description of it under the name of Lysimachus or Loose-strife in his *Two Voyages*, and says it "is taken by the English for Scabious."]

naturalized extensively in Europe. The clasping bell-flower (*Campanula perfoliata*, from the heart-shaped leaves clasping the stalk), an interesting flower.

The *Convolvulus sepium*, large bindweed, make a fresh morning impression as of dews and purity. The adder's-tongue arethusa, a delicate pink flower.

How different is day from day! Yesterday the air was filled with a thick fog-like haze, so that the sun did not once shine with ardor, but everything was so tempered under this thin veil that it was a luxury merely to be outdoors, — you were less out for it. The shadows of the apple trees even early in the afternoon were remarkably distinct. The landscape wore a classical smoothness. Every object was as in [a] picture with a glass over it. I saw some hills on this side the river, looking from Conantum, on which, the grass being of a yellow tinge, though the sun did not shine out on them, they had the appearance of being shone upon peculiarly. It was merely an unusual yellow tint of the grass. The mere surface of water was an object for the eye to linger on.

The panicled cornel, a low shrub, in blossom by wall-sides now.

I thought that one peculiarity of my "Week" was its *hypæthral* character, to use an epithet applied to those Egyptian temples which are open to the heavens above, *under the ether*. I thought that it had little of the atmosphere of the house about it, but might wholly have been written, as in fact it was to a considerable extent, out-of-doors. It was only at a late period in writing it, as it happened, that I used any phrases implying that

I lived in a house or led a *domestic* life. I trust it does not smell [so much] of the study and library, even of the poet's attic, as of the fields and woods; that it is a hypæthral or unroofed book, lying open under the ether and permeated by it, open to all weathers, not easy to be kept on a shelf.

The potatoes are beginning to blossom.

Riding to survey a wood-lot yesterday, I observed that a dog accompanied the wagon. Having tied the horse at the last house and entered the woods, I saw no more of the dog while there; but when riding back to the village, I saw the dog again running by the wagon, and in answer to my inquiry was told that the horse and wagon were hired and that the dog always accompanied the horse. I queried whether it might happen that a dog would accompany the wagon if a strange horse were put into it; whether he would ever attach himself to an inanimate object. Methinks the driver, though a stranger, as it were added intellect to the mere animality of the horse, and the dog, not making very nice distinctions, yielded respect to the horse and equipage as if it were human. If the horse were to trot off alone without a wagon or driver, I think it doubtful if the dog would follow; if with the wagon, then the chances of his following would be increased; but if with a driver, though a stranger, I have found by experience that he would follow.

At a distance in the meadow I hear still, at long intervals, the hurried commencement of the bobolink's strain, the bird just dashing into song, which is as suddenly checked, as it were, by the warder of the

seasons, and the strain is left incomplete forever. Like human beings they are inspired to sing only for a short season.[1]

That little roadside pea-like-blossomed blue flower [2] is interesting to me. The mulleins are just blossoming.

The voice of the crickets, heard at noon from deep in the grass, allies day to night. It is unaffected by sun and moon. It is a midnight sound heard at noon, a midday sound heard at midnight.

I observed some mulleins growing on the western slope of the sandy railroad embankment, in as warm a place as can easily be found, where the heat was reflected from the sand oppressively at 3 o'clock P. M. this hot day; yet the green and living leaves felt rather cool than otherwise to the hand, but the dead ones at the root were quite warm. The living plant thus preserves a cool temperature in the hottest exposure, as if it kept a cellar below, from which cooling liquors were drawn up.

Yarrow is now in full bloom, and elder, and a small many-headed white daisy like a small whiteweed. The epilobium, too, is out.

The night-warbler sings the same strain at noon. The song sparrow still occasionally reminds me of spring.

I observe that the high water in the ponds, which have been rising for a year, has killed most of the pitch pines and alders which it had planted and merely watered at its edge during the years of dryness. But now it comes to undo its own work.

[1] I have since heard some complete strains. [2] Pale lobelia.

How awful is the least unquestionable meanness, when we cannot deny that we have been guilty of it. There seem to be no bounds to our unworthiness.

June 30. Haying has commenced. I see the farmers in distant fields cocking their hay now at six o'clock. The day has been so oppressively warm that some workmen have lain by at noon, and the haymakers are mowing now in the early twilight.

The blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) enlivens the meadow. The lark sings at sundown off in the meadow. It is a note which belongs to a New England summer evening. Though so late, I hear the summer hum of a bee in the grass, as I am on my way to the river behind Hubbard's to bathe. After hoeing in a dusty garden all this warm afternoon, — so warm that the baker says he never knew the like and expects to find his horses dead in the stable when he gets home, — it is very grateful to wend one's way at evening to some pure and cool stream and bathe therein.

The cranberry is now in blossom. Their fresh shoots have run a foot or two over the surface.

I have noticed an abundance of poison sumach this season. It is now in blossom. In some instances it has the size and form of a healthy peach tree.

The cuckoo is faintly heard from a neighboring grove. Now that it is beginning to be dark, as I am crossing a pasture I hear a happy, cricket-like, shrill little lay from a sparrow, either in the grass or else on that distant tree, as if it were the vibrations of a watch-spring; its vespers. The tree-primrose, which was so abundant

in one field last Saturday, is now all gone. The cattle on Bear Garden Hill, seen through the twilight, look monstrously large. I find abounding in the meadows the adder's-tongue arethusa and occasionally with it the *Cymbidium tuberosum* of the same tint. The obtuse galium is a delicate vine-like plant with a minute white blossom in the same places. The St. John's-wort has blossomed. The *Œnothera pumila*, or dwarf tree-primrose, a neat yellow flower, abounds in the meadows; which the careless would mistake at a distance for buttercups. The white buds of the clethra (alder-leaved) rise above their recent shoots. The narrow-leaved cotton-grass spots the meadow with white, seeming like loose down, its stems are so slight. The carrot growing wild which I observed by the railroad is now blossoming, with its dishing blossom. I found by the railroad, a quarter of a mile from the road, some common garden catch-fly, the pink flower, growing wild. Angelica is now in blossom, with its large umbels. Swamp rose, fugacious-petalled. The prinos, or winterberry, budded, with white clustered berry-like flower-buds, is a pretty contrast to itself in the winter, — wax-like. While bathing I plucked the common floating plant like a small yellow lily, the yellow water ranunculus (*R. multifidus*). What I suppose is the *Aster miser*, small-flowered aster, like a small many-headed whiteweed, has now for a week been in bloom; a humble weed, but one of the earliest of the asters.[1] The umbelled thesium, a simple white flower, on the

[1] [Evidently not *Aster miser*, or, as it is now called *A. lateriflorus*, which flowers much later in the season.]

edge of the woods. *Erysimum officinale*, hedge mustard, with its yellow flowers.

I first observed about ten days ago that the fresh shoots of the fir balsam (*Abies balsamifera*), found under the tree wilted, or plucked and kept in the pocket or in the house a few days, emit the fragrance of strawberries, only it is somewhat more aromatic and spicy. It was to me a very remarkable fragrance to be emitted by a pine. A very rich, delicious, aromatic, spicy fragrance, which if the fresh and living shoots emitted, they would be still more to be sought after.

Saw a brood of young partridges yesterday, a little larger than robins.

VI

JULY, 1851

(ÆT. 33–34)

July 2. It is a fresh, cool summer morning. From the road at N. Barrett's, on my way to P. Blood's at 8.30 A. M., the Great Meadows have a slight bluish misty tinge in part; elsewhere a sort of hoary sheen like a fine downiness, inconceivably fine and silvery far away, — the light reflected from the grass blades, a sea of grass hoary with light, the counterpart of the frost in spring. As yet no mower has profaned it; scarcely a footstep since the waters left it. Miles of waving grass adorning the surface of the earth.

Last night, a sultry night which compelled to leave all windows open, I heard two travellers talking aloud, was roused out of my sleep by their loud, day-like, and somewhat unearthly discourse at perchance one o'clock. From the country, whiling away the night with loud discourse. I heard the words "Theodore Parker" and "Wendell Phillips" loudly spoken, and so did half a dozen of my neighbors, who also were awakened. Such is fame. It affected [me] like Dante talking of the men of this world in the infernal regions. If the travellers had called my own name I should equally have thought it an unearthly personage which it would take me some hours into daylight to realize. O traveller, have n't you got any further than that? My genius hinted before

I fairly awoke, "Improve your time." What is the night that a traveller's voice should sound so hollow in it? that a man speaking aloud in the night, speaking in regions under the earth, should utter the words "Theodore Parker"?

A traveller! I love his title. A traveller is to be reverenced as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from —— toward ——; it is the history of every one of us. I am interested in those that travel in the night.

It takes but little distance to make the hills and even the meadows look blue to-day. That principle which gives the air an azure color is more abundant.

To-day the milkweed is blossoming. Some of the raspberries are ripe, the most innocent and simple of fruits, the purest and most ethereal. Cherries are ripe. Strawberries in the gardens have passed their prime.

Many large trees, especially elms, about a house are a surer indication of old family distinction and worth than any evidence of wealth. Any evidence of care bestowed on these trees secures the traveller's respect as for a nobler husbandry than the raising of corn and potatoes.

I passed a regular country dooryard this forenoon, the unpainted one-story house, long and low with projecting stoop, a deep grass-plot unfenced for yard, hens and chickens scratching amid the chip dirt about the door, — this last the main feature, relics of wood-piles, sites of the wooden towers.

The nightshade has bloomed and the prinos, or winterberry.

July 5. The vetch-like flower by the Marlborough road, the *Tephrosia Virginica*, is in blossom, with mixed red and yellowish blossoms. Also the white fine-flowered Jersey tea (*Ceanothus Americana*), and, by the side of wood-paths, the humble cow-wheat (*Apocynum*, etc.). The blue flower by the roadside, slender but pretty spike, is the pale lobelia (*L. pallida*). The reddish blossoms of the umbelled wintergreen (*Pyrola umbellata*) are now in perfection and are exceedingly beautiful. Also the white sweet-scented flowers of the *P. rotundifolia*.

It is a remarkably cool, clear, breezy atmosphere to-day. One would say there were fewer flowers just now than there have been and are to be; *i. e.* we do not look so much for the blossoming of new flowers. The earliest small fruits are just beginning to be ripe,— the raspberry, thimble-berry, blueberry, etc. We have no longer the blossoms of those which must ripen their fruits in early autumn.

I am interested in those fields in the woods where the potato is cultivated, growing in the light, dry, sandy soil, free from weeds; now in blossom, the slight vine not crowded in the hill. I think they do not promise many potatoes, though mealy and wholesome like nuts. Many fields have now received their last hoeing, and the farmers' work seems to be soon over with them. What a pleasant interview he must have had with them! What a liberal education with these professors! Better than a university. It is pleasing to consider man's cultivating this plant thus assiduously, without reference to any crop it may yield him, as if he were to cultivate

johnswort in like manner. What influences does he receive from this long intercourse.

The flowers of the umbelled pyrola, or common wintergreen, are really very handsome now, dangling red from their little umbels like jewelry, — especially the unexpanded buds with their red calyx-leaves against the white globe of petals.

There is a handsome wood-path on the east side of White Pond. The shadows of the pine stems and branches falling across the path, which is perfectly red with pine-needles, make a very handsome carpet. Here is a small road running north and south along the edge of the wood, which would be a good place to walk by moonlight.

The calamint grows by the lane beyond Seven-Star Lane; now in blossom.

As we come over Hubbard's Bridge between 5 and 6 P. M., the sun getting low, a cool wind blowing up the valley, we sit awhile on the rails which are destined for the new railing. The light on the Indian hill is very soft and glorious, giving the idea of the most wonderful fertility. The most barren hills are gilded like waving grain-fields. What a paradise to sail by! The cliffs and woods up the stream are nearer and have more shadow and actuality about them. This retired bridge is a favorite spot with me. I have witnessed many a fair sunset from it.

July 6. *Sunday.* I walked by night last moon, and saw its disk reflected in Walden Pond, the broken disk, now here, now there, a pure and memorable flame

unearthly bright, like a cucullo [1] of a water-bug. Ah! but that first faint tinge of moonlight on the gap! (seen some time ago),[2] — a silvery light from the east before day had departed in the west. What an immeasurable interval there is between the first tinge of moonlight which we detect, lighting with mysterious, silvery, poetic light the western slopes, like a paler grass, and the last wave of daylight on the eastern slopes! It is wonderful how our senses ever span so vast an interval, how from being aware of the one we become aware of the other. And now the night wind blows, — from where? What gave it birth? It suggests an interval equal to that between the most distant periods recorded in history. The silver age is not more distant from the golden than moonlight is from sunlight. I am looking into the west, where the red clouds still indicate the course of departing day. I turn and see the silent, spiritual, contemplative moonlight shedding the softest imaginable light on the western slopes of the hills, as if, after a thousand years of polishing, their surfaces were just beginning to be bright, — a pale whitish lustre. Already the crickets chirp to the moon a different strain, and the night wind rustles the leaves of the wood. A different dynasty has commenced. Yet moonlight, like daylight, is more valuable for what it suggests than for what it actually is. It is a long past season of which I dream. And the reason is perchance because it is a more sacred and glorious season, to which I instantly refer all glorious actions in past time. Let a nobler landscape present itself, let a purer air blow, and I locate all the worthies

[1] [See p. 252.]

[2] [Night of June 12. See p. 249.]

of the world. Ah, there is the mysterious light which for some hours has illustrated Asia and the scene of Alexander's victories, now at length, after two or three hours spent in surmounting the billows of the Atlantic, come to shine on America. There, on that illustrated sand-bank, was revealed an antiquity beside which Nineveh is young. Such a light as sufficed for the earliest ages. From what star has it arrived on this planet? Yet even at midday I see the full moon shining in the sky. What if, in some vales, only its light is reflected? What if there are some spirits which walk in its light alone still? who separate the moonlight from the sunlight, and are shined on by the former only? I passed from dynasty to dynasty, from one age of the world to another age of the world, from Jove perchance back to Saturn. What river of Lethe was there to run between? I bade farewell to that light setting in the west and turned to salute the new light rising in the east.

There is some advantage in being the humblest, cheapest, least dignified man in the village, so that the very stable boys shall damn you. Methinks I enjoy that advantage to an unusual extent. There is many a coarsely well-meaning fellow, who knows only the skin of me, who addresses me familiarly by my Christian name. I get the whole good of him and lose nothing myself. There is "Sam," the jailer, — whom I never call Sam, however, — who exclaimed last evening: "Thoreau, are you going up the street pretty soon? Well, just take a couple of these handbills along and drop one in at Hoar's piazza and one at Holbrook's,

and I'll do as much for you another time." I am not above being used, aye abused, sometimes.

The red clover heads are now turned black. They no longer impart that rosaceous tinge to the meadows and fertile fields. It is but a short time that their rich bloom lasts. The white is black or withering also. Whiteweed still looks white in the fields. Blue-eyed grass is now rarely seen. The grass in the fields and meadows is not so fresh and fair as it was a fortnight ago. It is dryer and riper and ready for the mowers. Now June is past. June is the month for grass and flowers. Now grass is turning to hay, and flowers to fruits. Already I gather ripe blueberries on the hills. The red-topped grass is in its prime, tingeing the fields with red.

It is a free, flowing wind, with wet clouds in the sky, though the sun shines. The distant hills look unusually near in this atmosphere. Acton meeting-houses seen to stand on the side of some hills, Nagog or Nashoba, beyond, as never before. Nobscot looks like a high pasture in the sunlight not far off. From time to time I hear a few drops of rain falling on the leaves, but none is felt and the sun does not cease to shine. All serious showers go round me and get out of my way.

The clasping harebell is certainly a pretty flower, and so is the tephrosia. The poke has blossomed and the indigo-weed.

July 7. The intimations of the night are divine, methinks. Men might meet in the morning and report the news of the night, — what divine suggestions have been made to them. I find that I carry with me into

the day often some such hint derived from the gods, — such impulses to purity, to heroism, to literary effort even, as are never day-born.[1]

One of those mornings which usher in no day, but rather an endless morning, a protracted auroral season, for clouds prolong the twilight the livelong day.

And now that there is an interregnum in the blossoming of the flowers, so is there in the singing of the birds. The golden robin is rarely heard, and the bobolink, etc.

I rejoice when in a dream I have loved virtue and nobleness.

Where is Grecian history? It is when in the morning I recall the intimations of the night.

The moon is now more than half full. When I come through the village at 10 o'clock this cold night, cold as in May, the heavy shadows of the elms covering the ground with their rich tracery impress me as if men had got so much more than they had bargained for, not only trees to stand in the air, but to checker the ground with their shadows. At night they lie along the earth. They tower, they arch, they droop over the streets like chandeliers of darkness. In my walk the other afternoon, I saw the sun shining into the depths of a thick pine wood, checkering the ground like moonlight and illuminating the lichen-covered bark of a large white pine, from which it was reflected through the surrounding thicket as from another sun. This was so deep in the woods that you would have said no sun could penetrate thither.

[1] [See pp. 213, 214.]

I have been to-night with Anthony Wright to look through Perez Blood's telescope a second time. A dozen of Blood's neighbors were swept along in the stream of our curiosity. One who lived half a mile this side said that Blood had been down that way within a day or two with his terrestrial, or day, glass, looking into the eastern horizon [at] the hills of Billerica, Burlington, and Woburn. I was amused to see what sort of respect this man with a telescope had obtained from his neighbors, something akin to that which savages award to civilized men, though in this case the interval between the parties was very slight. Mr. Blood, with his skull-cap on, his short figure, his north European figure, made me think of Tycho Brahe. He did not invite us into his house this cool evening, — men nor women, — nor did he ever before to my knowledge. I am still contented to see the stars with my naked eye. Mr. Wright asked him what his instrument cost. He answered, "Well, that is something I don't like to tell." (Stuttering or hesitating in his speech a little as usual.) "It is a very proper question, however." "Yes," said I, "and you think that you have given a very proper answer."

Returning, my companion, Wright, the sexton, told me how dusty he found it digging a grave that afternoon, — for one who had been a pupil of mine. For two feet, he said, notwithstanding the rain, he found the soil as dry as ashes.

With a certain wariness, but not without a slight shudder at the danger oftentimes, I perceive how near I had come to admitting into my mind the details of

some trivial affair, as a case at court; and I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish, — to permit idle rumors, tales, incidents, even of an insignificant kind, to intrude upon what should be the sacred ground of the thoughts. Shall the temple of our thought be a public arena where the most trivial affairs of the market and the gossip of the tea-table is discussed, — a dusty, noisy, trivial place? Or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself, a place consecrated to the service of the gods, a hypæthral temple? I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my mind with the most insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news, — in newspapers and conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in this respect. Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into the mind, to stalk profanely through its very *sanctum sanctorum* for an hour, aye, for many hours! to make a very bar-room of your mind's inmost apartment, as if for a moment the dust of the street had occupied you, aye, the very street itself, with all its travel, passed through your very mind of minds, your thoughts' shrine, with all its filth and bustle! Would it not be an intellectual suicide? By all manner of boards and traps, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, excluding trespassers from these grounds, it behooves us to preserve the purity and sanctity of the mind.[1] It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember. If I am to be a channel or thor-

[1] [Channing, p. 85.]

oughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain springs, and not the town sewers, — the Parnassian streams. There is inspiration, the divine gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven; there is the profane and stale revelation of the bar-room and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the individual determines to which source chiefly it shall be open and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. They shall be dusty as stones in the street. Our very minds shall be paved and macadamized, as it were, their foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over. If we have thus desecrated ourselves, the remedy will be, by circumspection and wariness, by our aspiration and devotion, to consecrate ourselves, to make a fane of the mind. I think that we should treat our minds as innocent and ingenuous children whose guardians we are, — be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them! [1] Routine, conven-

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 473–476; *Misc.*, Riv. 276–279.]

tionality, manners, etc., etc., — how insensibly an undue attention to these dissipates and impoverishes the mind, robs it of its simplicity and strength, emasculates it!

Knowledge does not come to us by details but by *lieferungs* from the gods. What else is it to wash and purify ourselves? Conventionalities are as bad as impurities.[1] Only thought which is expressed by the mind in repose — as it were, lying on its back and contemplating the heavens — is adequately and fully expressed. What are sidelong, transient, passing half-views? The writer expressing his thought must be as well seated as the astronomer contemplating the heavens; he must not occupy a constrained position. The facts, the experience, we are well poised upon! which secures our whole attention!

The senses of children are unprofaned. Their whole body is one sense; they take a physical pleasure in riding on a rail, they love to teeter. So does the unviolated, the unsophisticated mind derive an inexpressible pleasure from the simplest exercise of thoughts.

I can express adequately only the thought which I *love* to express. All the faculties in repose but the one you are using, the whole energy concentrated in that. Be ever so little distracted, your thoughts so little confused, your engagements so few, your attention so free, your existence so mundane, that in all places and in all hours you can hear the sound of crickets in those seasons when they are to be heard. It is a mark of serenity and health of mind when a person hears this sound much,

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 475, 476; *Misc.*, Riv. 279.]

— in streets of cities as well as in fields. Some ears never hear this sound; are called deaf. Is it not because they have so long attended to other sounds?

July 8. *Tuesday.* Walked along the Clamshell bank after sundown. A cloudy sky. The heads of the grass in the pasture behind Dennis's have a reddish cast, but another grass, with a lighter-colored stem and leaves, on the higher parts of the field gives a yellowish tinge to those parts, as if they reflected a misty sunlight. Even much later in the night these light spots were distinguishable. I am struck by the cool, juicy, pickled-cucumber green of the potato-fields now. How lusty these vines look! The pasture naturally exhibits at this season no such living green as the cultivated fields. I perceive that flower of the lowlands now, with a peculiar leaf and conspicuous white umbels.[1]

Here are mulleins covering a field (the Clamshell field) where three years [ago] were none noticeable, but a smooth uninterrupted pasture sod. Two years ago it was plowed for the first time for many years, and millet and corn and potatoes planted, and now *where the millet grew* these mulleins have sprung up. Who can write the history of these fields? The millet does not perpetuate itself, but the few seeds of the mullein, which perchance were brought here with it, are still multiplying the race.

The thick heads of the yellow dock warn me of the lapse of time.

[1] Rue [*i. e.* meadow-rue].

Here are some rich rye-fields waving over all the land, their heads nodding in the evening breeze with an apparently alternating motion; *i. e.* they do not all bend at once by ranks, but separately, and hence this agreeable alternation. How rich a sight this cereal fruit, now yellow for the cradle, — *flavus!* It is an impenetrable phalanx. I walk for half a mile beside these Macedonians, looking in vain for an opening. There is no Arnold Winkelried to gather these spear-heads upon his breast and make an opening for me. This is food for man. The earth labors not in vain; it is bearing its burden. The yellow, waving, rustling rye extends far up and over the hills on either side, a kind of pinafore to nature, leaving only a narrow and dark passage at the bottom of a deep ravine. How rankly it has grown! How it hastes to maturity! I discover that there is such a goddess as Ceres. These long grain-fields which you must respect, — must go round, — occupying the ground like an army. The small trees and shrubs seen dimly in its midst are overwhelmed by the grain as by an inundation. They are seen only as indistinct forms of bushes and green leaves mixed with the yellow stalks. There are certain crops which give me the idea of bounty, of the *Alma Natura*.[1] They are the grains. Potatoes do not so fill the lap of earth. This rye excludes everything else and takes possession of the soil. The farmer says, "Next year I will raise a crop of rye;" and he proceeds to clear away the brush, and either plows it, or, if it is too uneven or stony, burns and harrows it only, and scatters the seed with faith. And all winter

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. i, p. 59.]

the earth keeps his secret, — unless it did leak out somewhat in the fall, — and in the spring this early green on the hillsides betrays him. When I see this luxuriant crop spreading far and wide in spite of rock and bushes and unevenness of ground, I cannot help thinking that it must have been unexpected by the farmer himself, and regarded by him as a lucky accident for which to thank fortune. This, to reward a transient faith, the gods had given. As if he must have forgotten that he did it, until he saw the waving grain inviting his sickle.

July 9. When I got out of the cars at Porter's, Cambridge, this morning, I was pleased to see the handsome blue flowers of the succory or endive (*Cichorium Intybus*), which reminded me that within the hour I had been whirled into a new botanical region. They must be extremely rare, if they occur at all, in Concord. This weed is handsomer than most garden flowers. Saw there also the *Cucubalus Behen*, or bladder campion, also the autumnal dandelion (*Apargia autumnalis*).

Visited the Observatory. Bond said they were cataloguing the stars at Washington (?), or trying to. They do not at Cambridge; of no use with their force. Have not force enough now to make mag[netic] obs[ervations]. When I asked if an observer with the small telescope could find employment, he said, Oh yes, there was employment enough for observation with the naked eye, observing the changes in the brilliancy of stars, etc., etc., if they could only get some good observers. One is glad to hear that the naked eye still retains some importance in the estimation of astronomers.

Coming out of town, — willingly as usual, — when I saw that reach of Charles River just above the depot, the fair, still water this cloudy evening suggesting the way to eternal peace and beauty, whence it flows, the placid, lake-like fresh water, so unlike the salt brine, affected me not a little. I was reminded of the way in which Wordsworth so coldly speaks of some natural visions or scenes "giving him pleasure." This is perhaps the first vision of elysium on this route from Boston. And just then I saw an encampment of Penobscots, their wigwams appearing above the railroad fence, they, too, looking up the river as they sat on the ground, and enjoying the scene. What can be more impressive than to look up a noble river just at evening, — one, perchance, which you have never explored, — and behold its placid waters, reflecting the woods and sky, lapsing inaudibly toward the ocean; to behold as a lake, but know it as a river, tempting the beholder to explore it and his own destiny at once? Haunt of waterfowl. This was above the factories, — all that I saw. That water could never have flowed under a factory. How *then* could it have reflected the sky?

July 10. A gorgeous sunset after rain, with horizontal bars of clouds, red sashes to the western window, barry clouds hanging like a curtain over the window of the west, damask. First there is a low arch of the storm clouds in the west, under which is seen the clearer, fairer, serener sky and more distant sunset clouds, and under all, on the horizon's edge, heavier, massive dark clouds, not to be distinguished from the mountains.

How many times I have seen this kind of sunset, — the most gorgeous sight in nature! From the hill behind Minott's I see the birds flying against this red sky, the sun having set; one looks like a bat. Now between two stupendous mountains of the low stratum under the evening red, clothed in slightly rosaceous amber light, through a magnificent gorge, far, far away, as perchance may occur in pictures of the Spanish coast viewed from the Mediterranean, I see a city, the eternal city of the west, the phantom city, in whose streets no traveller has trod, over whose pavements the horses of the sun have already hurried, some Salamanca of the imagination. But it lasts only for a moment, for now the changing light has wrought such changes in it that I see the resemblance no longer.

A softer amber sky than in any picture. The swallows are improving this short day, twittering as they fly, and the huckleberry-bird [1] repeats his jingling strain, and the song sparrow, more honest than most.

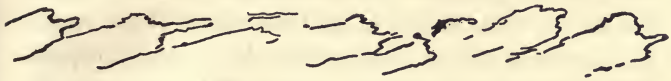
I am always struck by the centrality of the observer's position. He always stands fronting the middle of the arch, and does not suspect at first that a thousand observers on a thousand hills behold the sunset sky from equally favorable positions.

And now I turn and observe the dark masses of the trees in the east, not green but black. While the sun was setting in the west, the trees were rising in the east.

I perceive that the low stratum of dark clouds under

[1] [Thoreau's name for the field sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*, or, as it was called by Nuttall, *Fringilla juncorum*). He had the name from his old friend Minott.]

the red sky all dips one way, and to a remarkable degree presents the appearance of the butt ends of cannons slanted toward the sky, thus: —



Such uniformity on a large scale is unexpected and pleasant to detect, evincing the simplicity of the laws of their formation. Uniformity in the shapes of clouds of a single stratum is always to be detected, the same wind shaping clouds of the like consistency and in like positions. No doubt an experienced observer could discover the states of the upper atmosphere by studying the forms and characters of the clouds. I traced the distinct form of the cannon in seven instances, stretching over the whole length of the cloud, many a mile in the horizon.

And the nighthawk dashes past in the twilight with mottled (?) wing, within a rod of me.

July 11. *Friday.* At 7.15 P. M. with W. E. C. go forth to see the moon, the glimpses of the moon. We think she is not quite full; we can detect a little flatness on the eastern side. Shall we wear thick coats? The day has been warm enough, but how cool will the night be? It is not sultry, as the last night. As a general rule, it is best to wear your thickest coat even in a July night. Which way shall we walk? Northwest, that we may see the moon returning? But on that side the river prevents our walking in the fields, and on other accounts that direction is not so attractive. We go toward Bear

Garden Hill. The sun is setting. The meadow-sweet has bloomed. These dry hills and pastures are the places to walk by moonlight. The moon is silvery still, not yet inaugurated. The tree-tops are seen against the amber west. I seem to see the outlines of one spruce among them, distinguishable afar. My thoughts expand and flourish most on this barren hill, where in the twilight I see the moss spreading in rings and prevailing over the short, thin grass, carpeting the earth, adding a few inches of green to its circle annually while it dies within.

As we round the sandy promontory, we try the sand and rocks with our hands. The sand is cool on the surface but warmer a few inches beneath, though the contrast is not so great as it was in May. The larger rocks are perceptibly warm. I pluck the blossom of the milkweed in the twilight and find how sweet it smells. The white blossoms of the Jersey tea dot the hillside, with the yarrow everywhere. Some woods are black as clouds; if we knew not they were green by day, they would appear blacker still. When we sit, we hear the mosquitoes hum. The woodland paths are not the same by night as by day; if they are a little grown up, the eye cannot find them, but must give the reins to the feet, as the traveller to his horse. So we went through the aspens at the base of the Cliffs, their round leaves reflecting the lingering twilight on the one side, the waxing moonlight on the other. Always the path was unexpectedly open.

Now we are getting into moonlight. We see it reflected from particular stumps in the depths of the darkest woods, and from the stems of trees, as if it

selected what to shine on,[1] — a silvery light. It is a light, of course, which we have had all day, but which we have not appreciated, and proves how remarkable a lesser light can be when a greater has departed. How simply and naturally the moon presides! 'T is true she was eclipsed by the sun, but now she acquires an almost equal respect and worship by reflecting and representing him, with some new quality, perchance, added to his light, showing how original the disciple may be who still in midday is seen, though pale and cloud-like, beside his master. Such is a worthy disciple. In his master's presence he still is seen and preserves a distinct existence; and in his absence he reflects and represents him, not without adding some new quality to his light, not servile and never rival. As the master withdraws himself, the disciple, who was a pale cloud before, begins to emit a silvery light, acquiring at last a tinge of golden as the darkness deepens, but not enough to scorch the seeds which have been planted or to dry up the fertilizing dews which are falling.

Passing now near Well Meadow Head toward Baker's orchard. The sweet-fern and indigo-weed fill the path up to one's middle, wetting us with dews so high. The leaves are shining and flowing.[2] We wade through the luxuriant vegetation, seeing no bottom. Looking back toward the Cliffs, some dead trees in the horizon, high on the rocks, make a wild New Hampshire prospect. There is the faintest possible mist over the pond-holes, where the frogs are eructating, like the falling of huge drops, the bursting of mephitic air-bubbles rising from

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 402.] [2] [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 402.]

the bottom, a sort of blubbering, — such conversation as I *have* heard between men, a belching conversation, expressing a sympathy of stomachs and abdomens. The peculiar appearance of the indigo-weed, its misty massiveness, is striking. In Baker's orchard the thick grass looks like a sea of mowing in this weird moonlight, a bottomless sea of grass. Our feet must be imaginative, must know the earth in imagination only, as well as our heads. We sit on the fence, and, where it is broken and interrupted, the fallen and slanting rails are lost in the grass (really thin and wiry) as in water. We even see our tracks a long way behind, where we have brushed off the dew. The clouds are peculiarly wispy to-night, somewhat like fine flames, not massed and dark nor downy, not thick, but slight, thin wisps of mist.

I hear the sound of Heywood's Brook falling into Fair Haven Pond, inexpressibly refreshing to my senses. It seems to flow through my very bones. I hear it with insatiable thirst. It allays some sandy heat in me. It affects my circulations; methinks my arteries have sympathy with it. What is it I hear but the pure waterfalls within me, in the circulation of my blood, the streams that fall into my heart? What mists do I ever see but such as hang over and rise from my blood? The sound of this gurgling water, running thus by night as by day, falls on all my dashes, fills all my buckets, overflows my float-boards, turns all the machinery of my nature, makes me a flume, a sluice-way, to the springs of nature. Thus I am washed; thus I drink and quench my thirst.[1] Where the streams fall

[1] [See p. 155.]

into the lake, if they are only a few inches more elevated, all walkers may hear.

On the high path through Baker's wood I see, or rather feel, the tephrosia. Now we come out into the open pasture. And under those woods of elm and buttonwood, where still no light is seen, repose a family of human beings. By night there is less to distinguish this locality from the woods and meadows we have threaded. We might go very near to farmhouses covered with ornamental trees and standing on a highroad, thinking that [we] were in the most retired woods and fields still. Having yielded to sleep, man is a less obtrusive inhabitant of nature. Now, having reached the dry pastures again, we are surrounded by a flood of moonlight. The dim cart-path over the sward curves gracefully through the pitch pines, ever to some more fairy-like spot. The rails in the fences shine like silver. We know not whether we are sitting on the ruins of a wall, or the materials which are to compose a new one. I see, half a mile off, a phosphorescent arc on the hillside, where Bartlett's Cliff reflects the moonlight. Going by the shanty, I smell the excrements of its inhabitants, which I had never smelt before.

And now, at half-past 10 o'clock, I hear the cockerels crow in Hubbard's barns, and morning is already anticipated. It is the feathered, wakeful thought in us that anticipates the following day. This sound is wonderfully exhilarating at all times. These birds are worth far more to me for their crowing and cackling than for their drumsticks and eggs.[1] How singular the connec-

[1] [See *Walden*, pp. 140, 141; Riv. 199.]

tion of the hen with man, — that she leaves her eggs in his barns always! She is a domestic fowl, though still a little shyish of him. I cannot [help] looking at the whole as an experiment still and wondering that in each case it succeeds. There is no doubt at last but hens may be kept. They will put their eggs in your barn by a tacit agreement. They will not wander far from your yard.

July 12. 8 P. M. — Now at least the moon is full, and I walk alone, which is best by night, if not by day always. Your companion must sympathize with the present mood. The conversation must be located where the walkers are, and vary exactly with the scene and events and the contour of the ground. Farewell to those who will talk of nature unnaturally, whose presence is an interruption. I know but one with whom I can walk. I might as well be sitting in a bar-room with them as walk and talk with most. We are never side by side in our thoughts, and we cannot hear each other's silence. Indeed, we cannot be silent. We are forever breaking silence, that is all, and mending nothing. How can they keep together who are going different ways!

I start a sparrow from her three eggs in the grass, where she had settled for the night. The earliest corn is beginning to show its tassels now, and I scent it as I walk, — its peculiar dry scent.[1] (This afternoon I gathered ripe blackberries, and felt as if the autumn had commenced.) Now perchance many sounds and sights only remind me that they once said something to

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 403.]

me, and are so by association interesting. I go forth to be reminded of a previous state of existence, if perchance any memento of it is to be met with hereabouts. I have no doubt that Nature preserves her integrity. Nature is in as rude health as when Homer sang. We may at last by our sympathies be well. I see a skunk on Bear Garden Hill stealing noiselessly away from me, while the moon shines over the pitch pines, which send long shadows down the hill. Now, looking back, I see it shining on the south side of farmhouses and barns with a weird light, for I pass here half an hour later than last night. I smell the huckleberry bushes. I hear a human voice, — some laborer singing after his day's toil, — which I do not often hear. Loud it must be, for it is far away. Methinks I should know it for a white man's voice. Some strains have the melody of an instrument. Now I hear the sound of a bugle in the "Corner," reminding me of poetic wars; a few flourishes and the bugler has gone to rest. At the foot of the Cliff hill I hear the sound of the clock striking nine, as distinctly as within a quarter of a mile usually, though there is no wind. The moonlight is more perfect than last night; hardly a cloud in the sky, — only a few fleecy ones. There is more serenity and more light. I hear that sort of throttled or chuckling note as of a bird flying high, now from this side, then from that.[1] Methinks when I turn my head I see Wachusett from the side of the hill. I smell the butter-and-eggs as I walk. I am startled by the rapid transit of some wild animal across my path, a rabbit or a fox, — or you hardly

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 326; Riv. 401.]

know if it be not a bird. Looking down from the cliffs, the leaves of the tree-tops shine more than ever by day. Here and there a lightning-bug shows his greenish light over the tops of the trees.

As I return through the orchard, a foolish robin bursts away from his perch unnaturally, with the habits of man. The air is remarkably still and unobjectionable on the hilltop, and the whole world below is covered as with a gossamer blanket of moonlight. It is just about as yellow as a blanket. It is a great dimly burnished shield with darker blotches on its surface. You have lost some light, it is true, but you have got this simple and magnificent stillness, brooding like genius.[1]

July 13. Observed yesterday, while surveying near Gordon's, a bittern flying over near Gordon's, with moderate flight and outstretched neck, its breast-bone sticking out sharp like the bone in the throats of some persons, its anatomy exposed. The evergreen is very handsome in the woods now, rising somewhat spirally in a round tower of five or six stories, surmounted by a long bud. Looking across the river to Conantum from the open plains, I think how the history of the hills would read, since they have been pastured by cows, if every plowing and mowing and sowing and chopping were recorded. I hear, 4 P. M., a pigeon woodpecker on a dead pine near by, uttering a harsh and scolding scream, spying me. The chewink jingles on the tops of the bushes, and the rush

[1] *Vide* [p. 337].

sparrow,[1] the vireo, and oven-bird at a distance; and a robin sings, superior to all; and a barking dog has started something on the opposite side of the river; and now the wood thrush surpasses them all. These plains are covered with shrub oaks, birches, aspens, hickories, mingled with sweet-fern and brakes and huckleberry bushes and epilobium, now in bloom, and much fine grass. The hellebore by the brooksides has now fallen over, though it is not broken off. The cows now repose and chew the cud under the shadow of a tree, or crop the grass in the shade along the side of the woods, and when you approach to observe them they mind you just enough. I turn up the *Juniperus repens*, and see the lighter color of its leaves on the under sides, and its berries with three petal-like divisions in one end. The sweet-scented life-everlasting is budded.

This might be called the Hayer's or Haymaker's Moon, for I perceive that when the day has been oppressively warm the haymakers rest at noon and resume their mowing after sunset, sometimes quite into evening.

July 14. Passing over the Great Fields (where I have been surveying a road) this forenoon, where were some early turnips, the county commissioners plucked and pared them with their knives and ate them. I, too, tried hard to chew a mouthful of raw turnip and realize the life of cows and oxen, for it might be a useful habit in extremities. These things occur as the seasons revolve. These are things which travellers will do. How many

[1] [The field sparrow. See *Journal*, vol. i, p. 252, note.]

men have tasted a raw turnip! How few have eaten a whole one! Some bovine appetites, which find some fodder in every field. For like reasons we sometimes eat sorrel and say we love it, that we may return the hospitality of Nature by exhibiting a good appetite.

The citizen looks sharp to see if there is any dogwood or poison sumach in the swamp before he enters.

If I take the same walk by moonlight an hour later or earlier in the evening, it is as good as a different one. I love the night for its novelty; it is less prophaned than the day.[1]

The creaking of the crickets seems at the very foundation of all sound. At last I cannot tell it from a ringing in my ears. It is a sound from within, not without. You cannot dispose of it by listening to it. In proportion as I am stilled I hear it. It reminds me that I am a denizen of the earth.

July 16. *Wednesday.* Methinks my present experience is nothing; my past experience is all in all. I think that no experience which I have to-day comes up to, or is comparable with, the experiences of my boyhood. And not only this is true, but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence. "For life is a forgetting," etc. Formerly, methought, nature developed as I developed, and grew up with me. My life was ecstasy. In youth, before I lost any of my senses, I can remember that I was all alive, and inhabited my body with inexpressible satisfaction; both its weari-

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 323; Riv. 398.]

ness and its refreshment were sweet to me. This earth was the most glorious musical instrument, and I was audience to its strains. To have such sweet impressions made on us, such ecstasies begotten of the breezes! I can remember how I was astonished. I said to myself, — I said to others, — "There comes into my mind such an indescribable, infinite, all-absorbing, divine, heavenly pleasure, a sense of elevation and expansion, and [I] have had nought to do with it. I perceive that I am dealt with by superior powers.[1] This is a pleasure, a joy, an existence which I have not procured myself. I speak as a witness on the stand, and tell what I have perceived." The morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I led a life aloof from society of men. I wondered if a mortal had ever known what I knew. I looked in books for some recognition of a kindred experience, but, strange to say, I found none. Indeed, I was slow to discover that other men had had this experience, for it had been possible to read books and to associate with men on other grounds. The maker of me was improving me. When I detected this interference I was profoundly moved. For years I marched as to a music in comparison with which the military music of the streets is noise and discord. I was daily intoxicated, and yet no man could call me intemperate. With all your science can you tell how it is, and whence it is, that light comes into the soul?

Set out at 3 P. M. for Nine-Acre Corner Bridge *via* Hubbard's Bridge and Conantum, returning *via* Dashing Brook, rear of Baker's, and railroad at 6.30 P. M.

[1] [Channing, p. 84.]

The song sparrow, the most familiar and New England bird, is heard in fields and pastures, setting this midsummer day to music, as if it were the music of a mossy rail or fence post; a little stream of song, cooling, rippling through the noon, — the usually unseen songster usually unheard like the cricket, it is so common, — like the poet's song, unheard by most men, whose ears are stopped with business, though perchance it sang on the fence before the farmer's house this morning for an hour. There are little strains of poetry in our animals.

Berries are just beginning to ripen, and children are planning expeditions after them. They are important as introducing children to the fields and woods, and as wild fruits of which much account is made. During the berry season the schools have a vacation, and many little fingers are busy picking these small fruits. It is ever a pastime, not a drudgery. I remember how glad I was when I was kept from school a half a day to pick huckleberries on a neighboring hill all by myself to make a pudding for the family dinner. Ah, they got nothing but the pudding, but I got invaluable experience beside! A half a day of liberty like that was like the promise of life eternal. It was emancipation in New England. O, what a day was there, my countrymen!

I see the yellow butterflies now gathered in fleets in the road, and on the flowers of the milkweed (*Asclepias pulchra*) by the roadside, a really handsome flower; also the smaller butterfly, with reddish wings, and a larger, black or steel-blue, with wings spotted red on edge, and one of equal size, reddish copper-colored. Now you may

see a boy stealing after one, hat in hand. The earliest corn begins to tassel out, and my neighbor has put his hand in the hill some days ago and abstracted some new potatoes as big as nuts, then covered up again. Now they will need — or will get — no more weeding. The lark sings in the meadow; the very essence of the afternoon is in his strain. This is a New England sound, but the cricket is heard under all sounds. Still the cars come and go with the regularity of nature, of the sun and moon. (If a hen puts her eggs elsewhere than in the barns, — in woods or among rocks, — she is said to *steal* her nest!) The twittering of swallows is in the air, reminding me of water. The meadow-sweet is now in bloom, and the yarrow prevails by all roadsides. I see the hardhack too, homely but dear plant, just opening its red clustered flowers. The small aster, too, now abounds (*Aster miser*),[1] and the tall buttercup still. After wading through a swamp the other day with my shoes in my hand, I wiped my feet with sassafras leaves, which reminded me of some Arabian practices, the bruised leaves perfuming the air and by their softness being adapted to this purpose. The tree-primrose, or scabish, still is seen over the fence. The red-wings and crow blackbirds are heard chattering on the trees, and the cow troopials are accompanying the cows in the pastures for the sake of the insects they scare up. Oftentimes the thoughtless sportsman has lodged his charge of shot in the cow's legs or body in his eagerness to obtain the birds. St. John's-wort, one of the first of yellow flowers, begins to shine along the roadside. The mul-

[1] [This is queried in pencil. See p. 278.]

lein for some time past. I see a farmer cradling his rye, John Potter. Fields are partly mown, — some English grass on the higher parts of the meadow next to the road. The farmer's work comes not all at once. In haying time there is a cessation from other labors to a considerable extent. Planting is done, and hoeing mainly; only some turnip seed is to be scattered amid the corn. I hear the kingbird twittering or chattering like a stout-chested swallow. The prunella sends back a blue ray from under my feet as I walk; the pale lobelia too. The plaintive, spring-restoring peep of a bluebird is occasionally heard. I met loads of hay on the road, which the oxen draw indifferently, swaggering in their gait, as if it were not fodder for them. Methinks they should testify sometimes that they are working for themselves. The whiteweed is turning black. Grapes are half grown and lead the mind forward to autumn. It is an air this afternoon that makes you indifferent to all things, — perfect summer, but with a comfortable breeziness. You know not heat nor cold. What season of the year is this? The balls of the button-bush are half formed, with its fine, glossy, red-stemmed leaf atoning for its nakedness in the spring. My eye ranges over green fields of oats, for which there is a demand then somewhere. The wild rose peeps from amid the alders and other shrubs by the roadside. The elder-blow fills the air with its scent. The angelica, with its large umbels, is gone to seed. On it I find one of those slow-moving green worms, with rings spotted black and yellow, like an East Indian production. What if these grew as large as elephants? The honest and truly fair is more mod-

estly colored. Notwithstanding the drifting clouds, you fear no rain to-day. As you walk, you smell some sweet herbage, but detect not what it is. Hay is sticking to the willows and the alders on the causeway, and the bridge is sprinkled with it. The hemlock (*Cicuta Americana*) displays its white umbels now. The yellow lilies reign in the river. The painted tortoises drop off the willow stumps as you go over the bridge. The river is now so low that you can see its bottom, shined on by the sun, and travellers stop to look at fishes as they go over, leaning on the rails. The pickerel-weed sends up its heavenly blue. The color of the cows on Fair Haven Hill, how fair a contrast to the hillside! How striking and wholesome their clean brick-red! When were they painted? How carelessly the eye rests on them, or passes them by as things of course! The tansy is budded. The devil's-needles seem to rest in air over the water. There is nothing New-English about them.

Now, at 4 P. M., I hear the pewee in the woods, and the cuckoo reminds me of some silence among the birds I had not noticed. The vireo (red-eyed?) sings like a robin at even, incessantly, — for I have now turned into Conant's woods. The oven-bird helps fill some pauses. The poison sumach shows its green berries, now unconscious of guilt. The heart-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*) is seen in low open woods. The breeze displays the white under sides of the oak leaves and gives a fresh and flowing look to the woods. The river is a dark-blue winding stripe amid the green of the meadow. What is the color of the world? Green mixed with yellowish and reddish for hills and ripe grass, and

darker green for trees and forests; blue spotted with dark and white for sky and clouds, and dark blue for water. Beyond the old house I hear the squirrel chirp in the wall like a sparrow; so Nature merges her creations into one. I am refreshed by the view of Nobscot and the southwestern vales, from Conantum, seething with the blue element. Here comes a small bird with a ricochet flight and a faint twittering note like a messenger from Elysium. The rush sparrow jingles her small change, pure silver, on the counter of the pasture. From far I see the rye stacked up. A few dead trees impart the effect of wildness to the landscape, though it is a feature rare in an old settled country.

Methinks this is the first of dog-days. The air in the distance has a peculiar blue mistiness, or furnace-like look, though, as I have said, it is not sultry yet. It is not the season for distant views. Mountains are not *clearly* blue now. The air is the opposite to what it is in October and November. You are not inclined to travel. It is a world of orchards and small-fruits now, and you can stay at home if the well has cool water in it. The black thimble-berry is an honest, homely berry, now drying up as usual. I used to have a pleasant time stringing them on herd's-grass stems, tracing the wall-sides for them. It is pleasant to walk through these elevated fields, terraced upon the side of the hill so that the eye of the walker looks off into the blue cauldron of the air at his own level. Here the haymakers have just gone to tea, — at 5 o'clock, the farmer's hour, before the afternoon is ended, while he still thinks much work may still be done before night. He does not wait

till he is strongly reminded of the night. In the distance some burdened fields are black with haycocks. Some thoughtless and cruel sportsman has killed twenty-two young partridges not much bigger than robins, against the laws of Massachusetts and humanity. At the Corner Bridge the white lilies are budded. Green apples are now so large as to remind me of coddling and the autumn again.[1] The season of fruits is arrived. The dog's-bane has a pretty, delicate bell-like flower. The Jersey tea abounds. I see the marks of the scythes in the fields, showing the breadth of each swath the mowers cut. Cool springs are now a desideratum. The geranium still hangs on. Even the creeping vines love the brooks, and I see where one slender one has struggled down and dangles into the current, which rocks it to and fro. Filberts are formed, and you may get the berry stains out of your hands with their husks, if you have any. Nightshade is in blossom. Came through the pine plains behind James Baker's, where late was open pasture, now open pitch pine woods, only here and there the grass has given place to a carpet of pine-needles. These are among our pleasantest woods, — open, level, with blackberry vines interspersed and flowers, as lady's-slippers, earlier, and pinks on the outskirts. Each tree has room enough. And now I hear the wood thrush from the shade, who loves these pine woods as well as I. I pass by Walden's scalloped shore. The epilobium reflects a pink gleam up the vales and down the hills. The chewink jingles on a bush's top. Why will the Irishman drink of a puddle by the railroad instead of

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 294; Riv. 361.]

digging a well? How shiftless! What death in life! He cannot be said to live who does not get pure water.

The milkweeds, or silkweeds, are rich flowers, now in blossom. The *Asclepias syriaca*, or common milkweed; its buds fly open at a touch. But handsomer much is *Asclepias pulchra*, or water silkweed. The thin green bark of this last, and indeed of the other, is so strong that a man cannot break a small strip of it by pulling. It contains a mass of fine silken fibres, arranged side by side like the strings of a fiddle-bow, and may be bent short without weakening it.

What more glorious condition of being can we imagine than from impure to be becoming pure? It is almost desirable to be impure that we may be the subject of this improvement. That I am innocent to myself! That I love and reverence my life! That I am better fitted for a lofty society to-day than I was yesterday! To make my life a sacrament! What is nature without this lofty tumbling? May I treat myself with more and more respect and tenderness. May I not forget that I am impure and vicious. May I not cease to love purity. May I go to my slumbers as expecting to arise to a new and more perfect day. May I so live and refine my life as fitting myself for a society ever higher than I actually enjoy. May I treat myself tenderly as I would treat the most innocent child whom I love; may I treat children and my friends as my newly discovered self. Let me forever go in search of myself; never for a moment think that I have found myself; be as a stranger to myself, never a familiar, seeking

acquaintance still. May I be to myself as one is to me whom I love, a dear and cherished object. What temple, what fane, what sacred place can there be but the innermost part of my own being? The possibility of my own improvement, that is to be cherished. As I regard myself, so I am. O my dear friends, I have not forgotten you. I will know you to-morrow. I associate you with my ideal self. I had ceased to have faith in myself. I thought I was grown up and become what I was intended to be, but it is earliest spring with me. In relation to virtue and innocence the oldest man is in the beginning spring and vernal season of life. It is the love of virtue makes us young ever. That is the fountain of youth, the very aspiration after the perfect. I love and worship myself with a love which absorbs my love for the world. The lecturer suggested to me that I might become better than I am. Was it not a good lecture, then? May I dream not that I shunned vice; may I dream that I loved and practiced virtue.

July 18. It is a test question affecting the youth of a person, — Have you knowledge of the morning? Do you sympathize with that season of nature? Are you abroad early, brushing the dews aside? If the sun rises on you slumbering, if you do not hear the morning cock-crow, if you do not witness the blushes of Aurora, if you are not acquainted with Venus as the morning star, what relation have you to wisdom and purity? You have then forgotten your Creator in the days of your youth! Your shutters were darkened till noon!

You rose with a sick headache! In the morning sing, as do the birds. What of those birds which should slumber on their perches till the sun was an hour high? What kind of fowl would they be and new kind of bats and owls, — hedge sparrows or larks? then took a dish of tea or hot coffee before they began to sing?

I might have added to the list of July 16th the *Aralia hispida*, bristling aralia; the heart-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*); also the upright loosestrife (*L. racemosa*), with a rounded terminal raceme; the tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Sweet-gale fruit now green.

I first heard the locust sing, so dry and piercing, by the side of the pine woods in the heat of the day.

July 19. Here I am thirty-four years old,[1] and yet my life is almost wholly unexpanded. How much is in the germ! There is such an interval between my ideal and the actual in many instances that I may say I am unborn. There is the instinct for society, but no society. Life is not long enough for one success. Within another thirty-four years that miracle can hardly take place. Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly than those of nature; I am differently timed. I am contented. This rapid revolution of nature, even of nature in me, why should it hurry me? Let a man step to the music which he hears, however measured. Is it important that I should mature as soon as an apple tree? aye, as soon as an oak? May not my life in nature, in proportion as it is supernatural, be only the spring and infantile por-

[1] [His birthday was July 12.]

tion of my spirit's life? Shall I turn my spring to summer? May I not sacrifice a hasty and petty completeness here to entireness there? If my curve is large, why bend it to a smaller circle? My spirit's unfolding observes not the pace of nature. The society which I was made for is not here. Shall I, then, substitute for the anticipation of that this poor reality? I would [rather] have the unmixed expectation of that than this reality. If life is a waiting, so be it. I will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. What were any reality which I can substitute? Shall I with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over myself, though when it is done I shall be sure to gaze still on the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not, — that still distant sky o'erarching that blue expressive eye of heaven? [1] I am enamored of the blue-eyed arch of heaven.

I did not *make* this demand for a more thorough sympathy. This is not my idiosyncrasy or disease. He that made the demand will answer the demand.

My blood flows as slowly as the waves of my native Musketaquid; yet they reach the ocean sooner, perchance, than those of the Nashua.

Already the goldenrod is budded, but I can make no haste for that.

2 P. M. — The weather is warm and dry, and many leaves curl. There is a threatening cloud in the southwest. The farmers dare not spread their hay. It remains cocked in the fields. As you walk in the woods nowadays, the flies striking against your hat sound

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 358, 359; Riv. 502.]

like rain-drops. The stump or root fences on the Corner road remind me of fossil remains of mastodons, etc., exhumed and bleached in sun and rain. To-day I met with the first orange flower of autumn. What means this doubly torrid, this Bengal, tint? Yellow took sun enough, but this is the fruit of a dog-day sun. The year has but just produced it. Here is the Canada thistle in bloom, visited by butterflies and bees. The butterflies have swarmed within these few days, especially about the milkweeds. The swamp-pink still fills the air with its perfume in swamps and by the causeways, though it is far gone. The wild rose still scatters its petals over the leaves of neighboring plants. The wild morning-glory or bindweed, with its delicate red and white blossoms. I remember it ever as a goblet full of purest morning air and sparkling with dew, showing the dew-point, winding round itself for want of other support. It grows by the Hubbard Bridge causeway, near the angelica. The cherry-birds are making their *seringo* sound as they flit past. They soon find out the locality of the cherry trees. And beyond the bridge there is a goldenrod partially blossomed. Yesterday it was spring, and to-morrow it will be autumn. Where is the summer then? First came the St. John's-wort and now the goldenrod to admonish us. I hear, too, a cricket amid these stones under the blackberry vines, singing as in the fall. Ripe blackberries are multiplying. I see the red-spotted berries of the small Solomon's-seal in my path. I notice, in the decayed end of an oak post, that the silver grain is not decayed, but remains sound in thin flakes, alternating with the decayed por-

tions and giving the whole a honeycombed look. Such an object supramundane, as even a swallow may descend to light on, a dry mullein stalk for instance. I see that hens, too, follow the cows feeding near the house, like the cow troopial, and for the same object. They cannot so well scare up insects for themselves. This is the dog the cowbird uses to start up its insect game. I see yellow butterflies in pairs, pursuing each other a rod or two into the air, and now, as he had bethought himself of the danger of being devoured by a passing bird, he descends with a zigzag flight to the earth, and the other follows. The black huckleberries are now so thick among the green ones that they no longer incur suspicion of being worm-eaten.

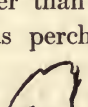
When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries; that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice, so little capital it required, so little distraction from my wonted thoughts, I foolishly thought. While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions, I thought of this occupation as most like theirs; ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way, which I might carelessly dispose of; so to keep the flocks of King Admetus. My greatest skill has been to want but little. I also dreamed that I might gather the wild herbs, or carry evergreens to such villagers as loved to be reminded of the woods and so find my living got. But I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles; and though you

trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.[1]

The wind rises more and more. The river and the pond are blacker than the threatening cloud in the south. The thunder mutters in the distance. The surface of the water is slightly rippled. Where the pads grow is a light green border. The woods roar. Small white clouds are hurrying across the dark-blue ground of the storm, which rests on all the woods of the south horizon. But still no rain now for some hours, as if the clouds were dissipated as fast as they reached this atmosphere.

The barberry's fruit hangs yellowish-green. What pretty covers the thick bush makes, so large and wide and drooping! The *Fringilla juncorum* sings still, in spite of the coming tempest, which, perchance, only threatens.

The woodchuck is a good native of the soil. The distant hillside and the grain-fields and pastures are spotted yellow or white with his recent burrows, and the small mounds remain for many years. Here where the clover has lately been cut, see what a yellow mound is brought to light!

Heavily hangs the common yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*) in the meadows. In the thick alder copses by the causeway-side I find the *Lysimachia hybrida*. Here is the *Lactuca sanguinea* with its runcinate leaves, tall stem, and pale-crimson ray. And that green-stemmed one higher than my head, resembling the last in its leaves, is perchance the "tall lettuce," or fireweed. Can that  fine white-flowered meadow-plant with the leaf be a thalictrum ?

[1] [*Walden*, p. 77; Riv. 110, 111.]

July 20. *Sunday morning.* A thunder-shower in the night. Thunder near at hand, though louder, is a more trivial and earthly sound than at a distance; likened to sounds of men. The clap which waked me last night was as if some one was moving lumber in an upper apartment, some vast hollow hall, tumbling it down and dragging it over the floor; and ever and anon the lightning filled the damp air with light, like some vast glow-worm in the fields of ether opening its wings.

The river, too, steadily yields its crop. In louring days it is remarkable how many villagers resort to it. It is of more worth than many gardens. I meet one, late in the afternoon, going to the river with his basket on his arm and his pole in hand, not ambitious to catch pickerel this time, but he thinks he may perhaps get a mess of small fish. These [*sic*] kind of values are real and important, though but little appreciated, and he is not a wise legislator who underrates them and allows the bridges to be built low so as to prevent the passage of small boats. The town is but little conscious how much interest it has in the river, and might vote it away any day thoughtlessly. There is always to be seen either some unshaven wading man, an old mower of the river meadows, familiar with water, vibrating his long pole over the lagoons of the off-shore pads, or else some solitary fisher, in a boat behind the willows, like a mote in the sunbeams reflecting the light; and who can tell how many a mess of river fish is daily cooked in the town? They are an important article of food to many a poor family.

Some are poets, some are not, — as in relation to

getting a living, so to getting a wife. As their ideals of life vary, so do their ideals of love.

4 P. M. Annursnack. — The under sides of the leaves, exposed by the breeze, give a light bluish tinge to the woods as I look down on them. Looking at the woods west of this hill, there is a grateful dark shade under their eastern sides, where they meet the meadows, their cool night side, — a triangular segment of night, to which the sun has set. The mountains look like waves on a blue ocean tossed up by a stiff gale. The *Rhexia Virginica* is in bloom.

July 21. 8 A. M. — The forenoon is fuller of light. The butterflies on the flowers look like other and frequently larger flowers themselves. Now I yearn for one of those old, meandering, dry, uninhabited roads, which lead away from towns, which lead us away from temptation, which conduct to the outside of earth, over its uppermost crust; where you may forget in what country you are travelling; where no farmer can complain that you are treading down his grass, no gentleman who has recently constructed a seat in the country that you are trespassing; on which you can go off at half-cock and wave adieu to the village; along which you may travel like a pilgrim, going nowhither; where travellers are not too often to be met; where my spirit is free; where the walls and fences are not cared for; where your head is more in heaven than your feet are on earth; which have long reaches where you can see the approaching traveller half a mile off and be pre-

pared for him; not so luxuriant a soil as to attract men; some root and stump fences which do not need attention; where travellers have no occasion to stop, but pass along and leave you to your thoughts; where it makes no odds which way you face, whether you are going or coming, whether it is morning or evening, mid-noon or midnight; where earth is cheap enough by being public; where you can walk and think with least obstruction, there being nothing to measure progress by; where you can pace when your breast is full, and cherish your moodiness; where you are not in false relations with men, are not dining nor conversing with them; by which you may go to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is wide enough, wide as the thoughts it allows to visit you. Sometimes it is some particular half-dozen rods which I wish to find myself pacing over, as where certain airs blow; then my life will come to me, methinks; like a hunter I walk in wait for it. When I am against this bare promontory of a huckleberry hill, then forsooth my thoughts will expand. Is it some influence, as a vapor which exhales from the ground, or something in the gales which blow there, or in all things there brought together agreeably to my spirit? The walls must not be too high, imprisoning me, but low, with numerous gaps. The trees must not be too numerous, nor the hills too near, bounding the view, nor the soil too rich, attracting the attention to the earth. It must simply be the way and the life, — a way that was never known to be repaired, nor to need repair, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. I cannot walk habitually in those ways that are liable to

be mended; for sure it was the devil only that wore them. Never by the heel of thinkers (of thought) were they worn; the zephyrs could repair that damage. The saunterer wears out no road, even though he travel on it, and therefore should pay no highway, or rather *low* way, tax. He may be taxed to construct a higher way than men travel. A way which no geese defile, nor hiss along it, but only sometimes their wild brethren fly far overhead; which the kingbird and the swallow twitter over, and the song sparrow sings on its rails; where the small red butterfly is at home on the yarrow, and no boys threaten it with imprisoning hat. There I can walk and stalk and pace and plod. Which nobody but Jonas Potter travels beside me; where no cow but his is tempted to linger for the herbage by its side; where the guide-board is fallen, and now the hand points to heaven significantly, — to a Sudbury and Marlborough in the skies. That's a road I can travel, that the particular Sudbury I am bound for, six miles an hour, or two, as you please; and few there be that enter thereon. There I can walk, and recover the lost child that I am without any ringing of a bell; where there was nothing ever discovered to detain a traveller, but all went through about their business; where I never passed the time of day with any, — indifferent to me were the arbitrary divisions of time; where Tullus Hostilius might have disappeared, — at any rate has never been seen. The road to the Corner! the ninety and nine acres that you go through to get there! I would rather see it again, though I saw it this morning, than Gray's churchyard. The road whence

you may hear a stake-driver, a whip-poor-will, a quail in a midsummer day, a — yes, a quail comes nearest to the *gum-c*[1] bird heard there; where it would not be sport for a sportsman to go. And the mayweed looks up in my face, — not there; the pale lobelia, the Canada snapdragon, rather. A little hardhack and meadow-sweet peep over the fence, — nothing more serious to obstruct the view, — and thimble-berries are the food of thought, before the drought, along by the walls.[2]

It is they who go to Brighton and to market that wear out the roads, and they should pay all the tax. The deliberate pace of a thinker never made a road the worse for travelling on.

There I have freedom in my thought, and in my soul am free. Excepting the omnipresent butcher with his calf-cart, followed by a distracted and anxious cow.[3]

Be it known that in Concord, where the first forcible resistance to British aggression was made in the year 1775, they chop up the young calves and give them to the hens to make them lay, it being considered the cheapest and most profitable food for them, and they sell the milk to Boston.

On the promenade deck of the world, an outside passenger. The inattentive, ever strange baker, whom no weather detains, that does not bake his bread in this hemisphere, —and therefore it is dry before it

[1] [So Channing (p. 128), who calls it "one of Thoreau's names for some bird, so named by the farmers." The word as written is far from clear.]

[2] *Vide* p. [373].

[3] [Channing, pp. 126–128.]

gets here. Ah! there is a road where you might advertise to fly, and make no preparations till the time comes; where your wings will sprout if anywhere, where your feet are not confined to earth. An airy head makes light walking.

Where I am not confined and balked by the sight of distant farmhouses which I have not gone past. In roads the obstructions are not under my feet, — I care not for rough ground or wet even, — but they are in my vision and in the thoughts or associations which I am compelled to entertain. I must be fancy-free; I must feel that, wet or dry, high or low, it is the genuine surface of the planet, and not a little chip-dirt or a compost-heap, or made land or redeemed. Where I can sit by the wall-side and not be peered at by any old ladies going a-shopping, not have to bow to one whom I may have seen in my youth, — at least, not more than once. I am engaged and cannot be polite. Did you ever hear of such a thing as a man sitting in the road, and then have four eyes levelled at you? Have we any more right sometimes to look at one than to point a revolver at him; it might go off; and so, perchance, we might *see* him, — though there is not so much danger of *that*, — which would be equally fatal, if it *should* ever happen, though perhaps it never has.

A thinker's weight is in his thought, not in his tread; when he thinks freely, his body weighs nothing. He cannot tread down your grass, farmers.[1]

I thought to walk this forenoon instead of this afternoon, for I have not been in the fields and woods much

[1] [Channing, pp. 128, 129.]

of late except when surveying, but the least affair of that kind is as if you had [a] black veil drawn over your face which shut out nature, as that eccentric and melancholy minister whom I have heard of.[1] It may be the fairest day in all the year and you shall not know it. One little chore to do, one little commission to fulfill, one message to carry, would spoil heaven itself. Talk about a lover being engaged! He is the only man in all the world who is free. And all you get is your dollars. To go forth before the heat is intolerable, and see what is the difference between forenoon and afternoon. It seems there is a little more coolness in the air; there is still some dew, even on this short grass in the shade of the walls and woods; and a feeling of vigor the walker has. There are few sounds but the slight twittering of swallows, and the *springy* note of the sparrow in the grass or trees, and a lark in the meadow (now at 8 A. M.), and the cricket under all to ally the hour to night. Day is, in fact, about as still as night. Draw the veil of night over this landscape, and these sounds would not disturb nor be inconsistent for their loudness with the night. It is a difference of white and black. Nature is in a white sleep. It threatens to be a hot day, and the haymakers are whetting their scythes in the fields, where they have been out since 4 o'clock. When I have seen them in the twilight commencing their labors, I have been impressed as if it were last night. There is something ghastly about such very early labor. I cannot detect the whole and characteristic difference between

[1] [See Hawthorne's story "The Minister's Black Veil" and footnote to the title, *Twice-Told Tales*, Riverside Edition, p. 52.]

this and afternoon, though it is positive and decided enough, as my instincts know. By 2 o'clock it will be warmer and hazier, obscuring the mountains, and the leaves will curl, and the dust will rise more readily. Every herb is fresher now, has recovered from yesterday's drought. The cooler air of night still lingers in the fields, as by night the warm air of day. The noon is perchance the time to stay in the house.

There is no glory so bright but the veil of business can hide it effectually. With most men life is postponed to some trivial business, and so therefore is heaven. Men think foolishly they may abuse and misspend life as they please and when they get to heaven turn over a new leaf.

I see the track of a bare human foot in the dusty road, the toes and muscles all faithfully imprinted. Such a sight is so rare that it affects me with surprise, as the footprint on the shore of Juan Fernandez did Crusoe. It is equally rare here. I am affected as if some Indian or South-Sea-Islander had been along, some man who had a foot. I am slow to be convinced that any of my neighbors — the judge on the bench, the parson in the pulpit — might have made that or something like it, however irregular. It is pleasant as it is to see the tracks of cows and deer and birds. I am brought so much nearer to the tracker — when again I think of the sole of my own foot — than when I behold that of his shoe merely, or am introduced to him and converse with him in the usual way. I am disposed to say to the judge whom I meet, "Make tracks."

Men are very generally spoiled by being so civil and

well-disposed. You can have no profitable conversation with them, they are so conciliatory, determined to agree with you. They exhibit such long-suffering and kindness in a short interview. I would meet with some provoking strangeness, so that we may be guest and host and refresh one another. It is possible for a man wholly to disappear and be merged in his manners. The thousand and one gentlemen whom I meet, I meet despairingly and but to part from them, for I am not cheered by the hope of any rudeness from them. A cross man, a coarse man, an eccentric man, a silent, a man who does not drill well, — of him there is some hope. Your gentlemen, they are all alike. They utter their opinions as if it was not a man that uttered them. It is "just as you please;" they are indifferent to everything. They will talk with you for nothing. The interesting man will rather avoid [you], and it is a rare chance if you get so far as talk with him. The laborers whom I know, the loafers, fishers, and hunters, I can spin yarns with profitably, for it is hands off; they are they and I am I still; they do not come to me and quarter themselves on me for a day or an hour to be treated politely, they do not cast themselves on me for entertainment, they do not approach me with a flag of truce. They do not go out of themselves to meet me. I am never electrified by my gentleman; he is not an electric eel, but one of the common kind that slip through your hands, however hard you clutch them, and leave them covered with slime. He is a man, every inch of him; is worth a groom.

To eat berries on the dry pastures of Conantum, as if

they were the food of thought, dry as itself! Berries are now thick enough to pick.

9 A. M. On Conantum. — A quarter of a mile is distance enough to make the atmosphere look blue now. This is never the case in spring or early summer. It was fit that I should see an indigo-bird here, concerned about its young, a perfect embodiment of the darkest blue that ever fills the valleys at this season. The meadow-grass reflecting the light has a bluish cast also.

Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; *i. e.*, lay up a store of natural influences. Sing while you may, before the evil days come. He that hath ears, let him hear. See, hear, smell, taste, etc., while these senses are fresh and pure.

There is always a kind of fine æolian harp music to be heard in the air. I hear now, as it were, the mellow sound of distant horns in the hollow mansions of the upper air, a sound to make all men divinely insane that hear it, far away overhead, subsiding into my ear. To ears that are expanded what a harp this world is! The occupied ear thinks that beyond the cricket no sound can be heard, but there is an immortal melody that may be heard morning, noon, and night, by ears that can attend, and from time to time this man or that hears it, having ears that were made for music. To hear this the hardhack and the meadow-sweet *aspire*. They are thus beautifully painted, because they are tinged in the lower stratum of that melody.

I eat these berries as simply and naturally as thoughts come to my mind.

Never yet did I chance to sit in a house, except my own house in the woods, and hear a wood thrush sing. Would it not be well to sit in such a chamber within sound of the finest songster of the grove?

The quail, invisible, whistles, and who attends?

10 A. M. — The white lily has opened. How could it stand these heats? It has pantingly opened, and now lies stretched out by its too long stem on the surface of the shrunken river. The air grows more and more blue, making pretty effects when one wood is seen from another through a little interval. Some pigeons here are resting in the thickest of the white pines during the heat of the day, migrating, no doubt. They are unwilling to move for me. Flies buzz and rain about my hat, and the dead twigs and leaves of the white pine, which the choppers have left here, exhale a dry and almost sickening scent. A cuckoo chuckles, half throttled, on a neighboring tree, and now, flying into the pine, scares out a pigeon, which flies with its handsome tail spread, dashes this side and that between the trees helplessly, like a ship carrying too much sail in midst of a small creek, some great amiral; having no room to manœuvre, — a fluttering flight.

The mountains can scarcely be seen for the blue haze, — only Wachusett and the near ones. The thorny apple bush on Conantum has lately sent up branches from its top, resolved to become a tree; and these spreading (and bearing fruit), the whole has the form of a vast hour-glass. The lower part being the most dense by far, you would say the sand had run out.[1]

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 305; Riv. 375.]

I now return through Conant's leafy woods by the spring, whose floor is sprinkled with sunlight, — low trees which yet effectually shade you.

The dusty mayweed now blooms by the roadside, one of the humblest flowers. The rough hawkweed, too, by the damp roadside, resembling in its flower the autumnal dandelion. That was probably the *Verbena hastata*, or common blue vervain, which I found the other day by Walden Pond.

The *Antirrhinum Canadense*, Canada snapdragon, in the Corner road; and the ragged orchis on Conantum.

8.30 P. M. — The streets of the village are much more interesting to me at this hour of a summer evening than by day. Neighbors, and also farmers, come a-shopping after their day's haying, are chatting in the streets, and I hear the sound of many musical instruments and of singing from various houses. For a short hour or two the inhabitants are sensibly employed. The evening is devoted to poetry, such as the villagers can appreciate.

How rare to meet with a farmer who is a man of sentiment! Yet there was one, Gen. Joshua Buttrick, who died the other day, who is said to have lived in his sentiments. He used to say that the smell of burning powder excited him.

It is said that Mirabeau took to highway robbery "to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society." He declared that "a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a foot-pad." "Honor and religion have

never stood in the way of a well-considered and a firm resolve.[1] Tell me, Du Saillant, when you lead your regiment into the heat of battle, to conquer a province to which he whom you call your master has no right whatever, do you consider that you are performing a better action than mine, in stopping your friend on the king's highway, and demanding his purse?"

"I obey without reasoning," replied the count.

"And I reason without obeying, when obedience appears to me to be contrary to reason," rejoined Mirabeau.[2]

This was good and manly, as the world goes; and yet it was desperate. A saner man would have found opportunities enough to put himself in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society, and so test his resolution, in the natural course of events, without violating the laws of his own nature. It is not for a man to *put himself* in such an attitude to society, but to *maintain* himself in whatever attitude he finds himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government.[3] Cut the leather only where the shoe pinches. Let us not have a rabid virtue that will be revenged on society, — that falls on it, not like the morning dew, but like the fervid noonday sun, to wither it.

July 22. The season of morning fogs has arrived. I think it is connected with dog-days. Perhaps it is owing

[1] [*Walden*, p. 355; Riv. 497.]

[2] *Harper's New Monthly*, vol. i, p. 648, from *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*.

[3] [*Walden*, p. 355; Riv. 497.]

to the greater contrast between the night and the day, the nights being nearly as cold, while the days are warmer? Before I rise from my couch, I see the ambrosial fog stretched over the river, draping the trees. It is the summer's vapor bath. What purity in the color! It is almost musical; it is positively fragrant. How faery-like it has visited our fields. I am struck by its firm outlines, as distinct as a pillow's edge, about the height of my house. A great crescent over the course of the river from southwest to northeast. Already, 5.30 A. M., some parts of the river are bare. It goes off in a body down the river, before this air, and does not rise into the heavens. It retreats, and I do not see how it is dissipated. This slight, thin vapor which is left to curl over the surface of the still, dark water, still as glass, seems not [to] be the same thing, — of a different quality. I hear the cockerels crow through it, and the rich crow of young roosters, that sound indicative of the bravest, rudest health, hoarse without cold, hoarse with rude health. That crow is all-nature-compelling; famine and pestilence flee before it. These are our fairest days, which are born in a fog.

I saw the tall lettuce yesterday (*Lactuca elongata*), whose top or main shoot had been broken off, and it had put up various stems, with entire and lanceolate, not runcinate leaves as usual, thus making what some botanists have called a variety, *β. linearis*. So I have met with some geniuses who, having met with some such accident maiming them, have been developed in some such *monstrous* and partial, though original, way. They were original in being less than themselves.

Yes, your leaf is peculiar, and some would make of you a distinct variety, but to me you appear like the puny result of an accident and misfortune, for you have lost your main shoot, and the leaves which would have grown runcinate are small and lanceolate.

The last Sunday afternoon I smelled the clear pork frying for a farmer's supper thirty rods off (what a Sunday supper!), the windows being open, and could imagine the *clear* tea without milk which usually accompanies it.

Now the cat-o'-nine-tails are seen in the impenetrable meadows, and the tall green rush is perfecting its tufts. The spotted polygonum (*P. Persicaria*) by the roadside.

I scare up a woodcock from some moist place at midday.

The pewee and kingbird are killing bees, perched on a post or a dead twig.

I bathe me in the river. I lie down where it is shallow, amid the weeds over its sandy bottom; but it seems shrunken and parched; I find it difficult to get *wet* through. I would fain be the channel of a mountain brook. I bathe, and in a few hours I bathe again, not remembering that I was wetted before. When I come to the river, I take off my clothes and carry them over, then bathe and wash off the mud and continue my walk. I would fain take rivers in my walks endwise.

There was a singular charm for me in those French names, — more than in the things themselves. The names of Italian and Grecian cities, villages, and natural features are not more poetic to me than the

names of those humble Canadian villages. To be told by a habitant, when I asked the name of a village in sight, that is St. Féréol or St. Anne's! But I was quite taken off my feet when, running back to inquire what river we were crossing, and thinking for a long time he said *la rivière d'océan*, it flashed upon me at last that it was *La Rivière du Chien*.[1]

There was so much grace and sentiment and refinement in the names, how could they be coarse who took them so often on their lips, — St. Anne's, St. Joseph's; the holy Anne's, the holy Joseph's! Next to the Indian, the French missionary and voyageur and Catholic habitant have named the natural features of the land. The *prairie*, the *voyageur!* Or does every man think his neighbor is the richer and more fortunate man, his neighbor's fields the richest?

It needed only a little outlandishness in the names, a little foreign accent, a few more vowels in the words, to make me locate all my ideals at once. How prepared we are for another world than this! We are no sooner over the line of the States than we expect to see men leading poetic lives, — nothing so natural, that is the presumption. The names of the mountains, and the streams, and the villages reel with the intoxication of poetry — Longueuil, Chambly, Barthillon (?), Montilly (?).[2]

Where there were books only, to find realities. Of course we assign to the place the idea which the written

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 56, 57; Riv. 69, 70.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 57; Riv. 71.]

history or poem suggested. Quebec, of course, is never seen for what it simply is to practical eyes, but as the local habitation of those thoughts and visions which we have derived from reading of Wolfe and Montcalm, Montgomery and Arnold. It is hard to make me attend to the geology of Cape Diamond or the botany of the Plains of Abraham.[1] How glad we are to find that there is another race of men! for they may be more successful and fortunate than we.

Canada is not a place for railroads to terminate in, or for criminals to run to.[2]

July 23. *Wednesday.* I remember the last moon, shining through a creamy atmosphere, with a tear in the eye of Nature and her tresses dishevelled and drooping, sliding up the sky, the glistening air, the leaves shining with dew, pulsating upward; an atmosphere unworn, unprophaned by day. What self-healing in Nature! — swept by the dews.

For some weeks past the roadsides and the dry and trivial fields have been covered with the field trefoil (*Trifolium arvense*), now in bloom.

8 A. M. — A comfortable breeze blowing. Methinks I can write better in the afternoon, for the novelty of it, if I should go abroad this morning. My genius makes distinctions which my understanding cannot, and which my senses do not report. If I should reverse the usual, — go forth and saunter in the fields all the

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 88; Riv. 109, 110.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 57; Riv. 71.]

forenoon, then sit down in my chamber in the afternoon, which it is so unusual for me to do, — it would be like a new season to me, and the novelty of it [would] inspire me. The wind has fairly blown me outdoors; the elements were so lively and active, and I so sympathized with them, that I could not sit while the wind went by. And I am reminded that we should especially improve the summer to live out-of-doors. When we may so easily, it behooves us to break up this custom of sitting in the house, for it is but a custom, and I am not sure that it has the sanction of common sense. A man no sooner gets up than he sits down again. Fowls leave their perch in the morning, and beasts their lairs, unless they are such as go abroad only by night. The cockerel does not take up a new perch *in the barn*, and he is the embodiment of health and common sense. Is the literary man to live always or chiefly sitting in a chamber through which nature enters by a window only? What is the use of the summer?

You must walk so gently as to hear the finest sounds, the faculties being in repose. Your mind must not perspire. True, out of doors my thought is commonly drowned, as it were, and shrunken, pressed down by stupendous piles of light ethereal influences, for the pressure of the atmosphere is still fifteen pounds to a square inch. I can do little more than preserve the equilibrium and resist the pressure of the atmosphere. I can only nod like the rye-heads in the breeze. I expand more surely in my chamber, as far as expression goes, as if that pressure were taken off; but here outdoors is the place to store up influences.

The swallow's twitter is the sound of the lapsing waves of the air, or when they break and burst, as his wings represent the ripple. He has more air in his bones than other birds; his feet are defective. The fish of the air. His note is the voice of the air. As fishes may hear the sound of waves lapsing on the surface and see the outlines of the ripples, so we hear the note and see the flight of swallows.

The influences which make for one walk more than another, and one day more than another, are much more ethereal than terrestrial. It is the quality of the air much more than the quality of the ground that concerns the walker, — cheers or depresses him. What he may find in the air, not what he may find on the ground.

On such a road (the Corner) I walk securely, seeing far and wide on both sides, as if I were flanked by light infantry on the hills, to rout the provincials, as the British marched into Concord, while my grenadier thoughts keep the main road. That is, my light-armed and wandering thoughts scour the neighboring fields, and so I know if the coast is clear. With what a breadth of van I advance! I am not bounded by the walls. I think more than the road full. (Going southwesterly.)

While I am abroad, the ovipositors plant their seeds in me; I am fly-blown with thought, and go home to hatch and brood over them.

I was too discursive and rambling in my thought for the chamber, and must go where the wind blows on me walking.

A little brook crossing the road (the Corner road),

a few inches' depth of transparent water rippling over yellow sand and pebbles, the pure blood of nature. How miraculously crystal-like, how exquisite, fine, and subtle, and liquid this element, which an imperceptible inclination in the channel causes to flow thus surely and swiftly! How obedient to its instinct, to the faintest suggestion of the hills! If inclined but a hair's breadth, it is in a torrent haste to obey. And all the revolutions of the planet — nature is so exquisitely adjusted — and the attraction of the stars do not disturb this equipoise, but the rills still flow the same way, and the water levels are not disturbed.

We are not so much like debauchees as in the afternoon.

The mind is subject to moods, as the shadows of clouds pass over the earth. Pay not too much heed to them. Let not the traveller stop for them. They consist with the fairest weather. By the mood of my mind, I suddenly felt dissuaded from continuing my walk, but I observed at the same instant that the shadow of a cloud was passing over [the] spot on which I stood, though it was of small extent, which, if it had no connection with my mood, at any rate suggested how transient and little to be regarded that mood was. I kept on, and in a moment the sun shone on my walk within and without.

The button-bush in blossom. The tobacco-pipe in damp woods. Certain localities only a few rods square in the fields and on the hills, sometimes the other side of a wall, attract me as if they had been the scene of pleasure in another state of existence.

But this habit of close observation, — in Humboldt, Darwin, and others. Is it to be kept up long, this science? Do not tread on the heels of your experience. Be impressed without making a minute of it. Poetry puts an interval between the impression and the expression, — waits till the seed germinates naturally.

July 24. 5 A. M. — The street and fields betray the drought and look more parched than at noon; they look as I feel, — languid and thin and feeling my nerves. The potatoes and the elms and the herbage by the roadside, though there is a slight dew, seem to rise out of an arid and thirsty soil into the atmosphere of a furnace slightly cooled down. The leaves of the elms are yellow. Ah! now I see what the noon was and what it may be again. The effects of drought are never more apparent than at dawn. Nature is like a hen panting with open mouth, in the grass, as the morning after a debauch.

July 25. *Friday.* Started for Clark's Island at 7 A. M.

At 9 A. M. took the Hingham boat and was landed at Hull. There was a pleasure party on board, apparently boys and girls belonging to the South End, going to Hingham. There was a large proportion of ill-dressed and ill-mannered boys of Irish extraction. A sad sight to behold! Little boys of twelve years, prematurely old, sucking cigars! I felt that if I were their mothers I should whip them and send them to bed. Such children should be dealt with as for stealing or impurity. The opening of this valve for the safety of the city!

Oh, what a wretched resource! What right have parents to beget, to bring up, and attempt to *educate* children in a city? I thought of infanticide among the Orientals with complacency. I seemed to hear infant voices lisp, "Give us a fair chance, parents." There is no such squalidness in the country. You would have said that they must all have come from the house of correction and the farm-school, but such a company do the boys in Boston streets make. The birds have more care for their young, — where they place their nests. What are a city's charities? She cannot be charitable any more than the old philosopher could move the earth, unless she has a resting-place without herself. A true culture is more possible to the savage than to the boy of average intellect, born of average parents, in a great city. I believe that they perish miserably. How can they be kept clean, physically or morally? It is folly to attempt to educate children within a city; the first step must be to remove them out of it. It seemed a groping and helpless philanthropy that I heard of.

I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's Mate to some girls, as we passed that spot, how "he said, 'If I am guilty, this island will remain; but if I am innocent, it will be washed away,' and now it is all washed away." [1] This was a simple and strong expression of feeling suitable to the occasion, by which he committed the evidence of his innocence to the dumb isle, such as the boy could appreciate, a proper sailor's legend; and I was reminded that it is the illiterate and unimaginative class that seizes on and transmits the legends in which

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 267; Riv. 323.]

the more cultivated delight. No fastidious poet dwelling in Boston had tampered with it, — no narrow poet, but broad mankind, sailors from all ports sailing by. They, sitting on the deck, were the literary academy that sat upon its periods.

On the beach at Hull, and afterwards all along the shore to Plymouth, I saw the datura, the variety (red-stemmed), methinks, which some call *Tatula* instead of *Stramonium*. I felt as if I was on the highway of the world, at sight of this cosmopolite and veteran traveller. It told of commerce and sailors' yarns without end. It grows luxuriantly in sand and gravel. This Captain Cook among plants, this Norseman or sea pirate, viking or king of the bays, the beaches. It is not an innocent plant; it suggests commerce, with its attendant vices.[1]

Saw a public house where I landed at Hull, made like some barns which I have seen, of boards with a cleat nailed over the cracks, without clapboards or paint, evidently very simple and cheap, yet neat and convenient as well as airy. It interested me, as the New House at Long Island did not, as it brought the luxury and comfort of the seashore within reach of the less wealthy. It was such an exhibition of good sense as I was not prepared for and do not remember to have seen before. Ascended to the top of the hill, where is the old French fort, with the well said to be ninety feet deep, now covered.[2] I saw some horses standing on the very top of the ramparts, the highest part of Hull, where

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 14; Riv. 15.]
[2] [*Cape Cod*, p. 16; Riv. 17.]

there was hardly room to turn round, for the sake of the breeze.[1] It was excessively warm, and their instincts, or their experience perchance, guided them as surely to the summit as it did me. Here is the telegraph, nine miles from Boston, whose State-House was just visible, — movable signs on a pole with holes in them for the passage of the wind. A man about the telegraph station thought it the highest point in the harbor; said they could tell the kind of vessel thirty miles off, the number at masthead ten or twelve miles, name on hull six or seven miles. They can see furthest in the fall. There is a mist summer and winter, when the contrast between the temperature of the sea and the air is greatest. I did not see why this hill should not be fortified as well as George's Island, it being higher and also commanding the main channel. However, an enemy could go by all the forts in the dark, as Wolfe did at Quebec.[2] They are bungling contrivances.

Here the bank is rapidly washing away. On every side, in Boston Harbor, the evidences of the wasting away of the islands are so obvious and striking that they appear to be wasting faster than they are. You will sometimes see a springing hill, showing by the interrupted arch of its surface against the sky how much space [it] must have occupied where there is now water, as at Point Allerton, — what botanists call premorse. Hull looks as if it had been two islands, since connected by a beach. I was struck by the gracefully curving

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 14; Riv. 15.]

[2] [See *Excursions*, p. 79; Riv. 98.]

and fantastic shore of a small island (Hog Island) inside of Hull, where everything seemed to be gently lapsing into futurity, as if the inhabitants should bear a ripple for device on their coat-of-arms, a wave passing over them, with the datura growing on their shores. The wrecks of isles fancifully arranged into a new shore. To see the sea nibbling thus voraciously at the continents![1] A man at the telegraph told me of a white oak pole a foot and a half in diameter, forty feet high, and four feet or more in the rock at Minot's Ledge, with four guys, which stood only one year. Stone piled up cob-fashion near same place stood eight years.

Hull pretty good land, but bare of trees — only a few cherries for the most part — and mostly uncultivated, being owned by few. I heard the voices of men shouting aboard a vessel half a mile from the shore, which sounded as if they were in a barn in the country, they being between the sails. It was not a sea sound. It was a purely rural sound.[2]

Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps. Here were many lobster traps on the shore. The beds of dry seaweed or eel-grass on the beach remind me of narrow shavings. On the farther hill in Hull, I saw a field full of Canada thistles close up to the fences on all sides, while beyond them there was none. So much for these fields having been subjected to different culture. So a differ-

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 15; Riv. 15, 16.]
[2] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 14, 15; Riv. 15.]

ent culture in the case of men brings in different weeds. As are the virtues, so are the vices. Weeds come in with the seeds, though perhaps much more in the manure. Each kind of culture will introduce its own weeds.

I am bothered to walk with those who wish to keep step with me. It is not necessary to keep step with your companion, as some endeavor to do.

They told me at Hull that they burned the *stem* of the kelp chiefly for potash. Chemistry is not a splitting hairs when you have got half a dozen raw Irishmen in the laboratory.

As I walked on the beach (Nantasket), panting with thirst, a man pointed to a white spot on the side of a distant hill (Strawberry Hill he called it) which rose from the gravelly beach, and said that there was a pure and cold and unfailing spring; and I could not help admiring that in this town of Hull, of which I had heard, but now for the first time saw, a single spring should appear to me and should be of so much value. I found Hull indeed, but there was also a spring on that parched, unsheltered shore; the spring, though I did not visit it, made the deepest impression on my mind. Hull, the place of the spring and of the well. This is what the traveller would remember. All that he remembered of Rome was a spring on the Capitoline Hill![1]

It is the most perfect seashore I have seen.[2] The rockweed falls over you like the *tresses* of mermaids,

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 15, 16; Riv. 16.]

[2] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 16, 17; Riv. 17, 18.]

and you see the propriety of that epithet. You cannot swim among these weeds and pull yourself up by them without thinking of mermen and mermaids.

The barnacles on the rocks, which make a whitish strip a few feet in width just above the weeds, remind me of some vegetable growth which I have seen, — surrounded by a circle of calyx-like or petal-like shells like some buds or seed-vessels. They, too, clinging to the rocks like the weeds; lying along the seams of the rock like buttons on a waistcoat.

I saw in Cohasset, separated from the sea only by a narrow beach, a very large and handsome but shallow lake, of at least four hundred acres, with five rocky islets in it; which the sea had tossed over the beach in the great storm in the spring, and, after the alewives had passed into it, stopped up its outlet; and now the alewives were dying by thousands, and the inhabitants apprehended a pestilence as the water evaporated. The water was very foul.[1]

The rockweed is considered the best for manure. I saw them drying the Irish moss in quantities at Jerusalem Village in Cohasset. It is said to be used for sizing calico. Finding myself on the edge of a thunder-storm, I stopped a few moments at the Rock House in Cohasset, close to the shore. There was scarcely rain enough to wet one, and no wind. I was therefore surprised to hear afterward, through a young man who had just returned from Liverpool, that there was a severe squall at quarantine ground, only seven or eight miles northwest of me, such as he had not experienced

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 16, 17; Riv. 17–19.]

for three years, which sunk several boats and caused some vessels to drag their anchors and come near going ashore; proving that the gust which struck the water there must have been of very limited breadth, for I was or might have been overlooking the spot and felt no wind. This rocky shore is called Pleasant Cove on large maps; on the map of Cohasset alone, the name seems to be confined to the cove where I first saw the wreck of the St. John alone.[1]

Brush Island, opposite this, with a hut on it, not permanently inhabited. It takes but little soil to tempt men to inhabit such places. I saw here the American holly (*Ilex opaca*), which is not found further north than Massachusetts, but south and west. The yellow gerardia in the woods.

July 26. At Cohasset. — Called on Captain Snow, who remembered hearing fishermen say that they "fitted out at Thoreau's;" remembered him. He had commanded a packet between Boston or New York and England. Spoke of the wave which he sometimes met on the Atlantic coming against the wind, and which indicated that the wind was blowing from an opposite quarter at a distance, the undulation travelling faster than the wind. They see Cape Cod loom here. Thought the Bay between here and Cape Ann thirty fathoms deep; between here and Cape Cod, sixty or seventy fathoms. The "Annual of Scientific Discovery" for 1851 says, quoting a Mr. A. G. Findley, "Waves travel very great distances, and are often raised by distant

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 16, 18; Riv. 17, 19.]

hurricanes, having been felt simultaneously at St. Helena and Ascension, though 600 miles apart, and it is probable that ground swells often originate at the Cape of Good Hope, 3000 miles distant." Sailors tell of tide-rips. Some are thought to be occasioned by earthquakes.

The ocean at Cohasset did not look as if any were ever shipwrecked in it. Not a vestige of a wreck left. It was not grand and sublime now, but beautiful. The water held in the little hollows of the rocks, on the receding of the tide, is so crystal-pure that you cannot believe it salt, but wish to drink it.[1]

The architect of a Minot Rock lighthouse might profitably spend a day studying the worn rocks of Cohasset shore, and learn the power of the waves, see what kind of sand the sea is using to grind them down.

A fine delicate seaweed, which some properly enough call sea-green. Saw here the staghorn, or velvet, sumach (*Rhus typhina*), so called from form of young branches, a size larger than the *Rhus glabra* common with us. The *Plantago maritima*, or sea plantain, properly named. I guessed its name before I knew what it was called by botanists. The American sea-rocket (*Bunias edentula*) I suppose it was that I saw, — the succulent plant with much cut leaves and small pinkish (?) flowers.

July 27. *Sunday.* Walked from Cohasset to Duxbury and sailed thence to Clark's Island.

Visited the large tupelo tree (*Nyssa multiflora*) in

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 17, 18; Riv. 18, 19.]

Scituate, whose rounded and open top, like some umbelliferous plant's, I could see from Mr. Sewal's, the tree which George Emerson went twenty-five miles to see, called sometimes snag-tree and swamp hornbeam, also pepperidge and gum-tree. Hard to split. We have it in Concord. Cardinal-flower in bloom. Scituate meeting-houses on very high ground; the principal one a landmark for sailors. Saw the buckthorn, which is naturalized. One of Marshfield meeting-houses on the height of land on my road. The country generally descends westerly toward the sources of Taunton River.

After taking the road by Webster's beyond South Marshfield, I walked a long way at noon, hot and thirsty, before I could find a suitable place to sit and eat my dinner, — a place where the shade and the sward pleased me. At length I was obliged to put up with a small shade close to the ruts, where the only stream I had seen for some time crossed the road. Here, also, numerous robins came to cool and wash themselves and to drink. They stood in the water up to their bellies, from time to time wetting their wings and tails and also ducking their heads and sprinkling the water over themselves; then they sat on a fence near by to dry. Then a goldfinch came and did the same, accompanied by the less brilliant female. These birds evidently enjoyed their bath greatly, and it seemed indispensable to them.

A neighbor of Webster's told me that he had hard on to sixteen hundred acres and was still buying more, — a farm and factory within the year; cultivated a hundred and fifty acres. I saw twelve acres of potatoes

together, the same of rye and wheat, and more methinks of buckwheat. Fifteen or sixteen men, Irish mostly, at ten dollars a month, doing the work of fifty, with a Yankee overseer, long a resident of Marshfield, named Wright. Would eat only the produce of his farm during the few weeks he was at home, — brown bread and butter and milk, — and sent out for a pig's cheek to eat with his greens. Ate only what grew on his farm, but drank more than ran on his farm.

Took refuge from the rain at a Mr. Stetson's in Duxbury.

I forgot to say that I passed the Winslow House, now belonging to Webster. This land was granted to the family in 1637.

Sailed with tavern-keeper Winsor, who was going out mackereling. Seven men, stripping up their clothes, each bearing an armful of wood and one some new potatoes, walked to the boats, then shoved them out a dozen rods over the mud, then rowed half a mile to the schooner of forty-three tons. They expected [to] be gone about a week, and to begin to fish perhaps the next morning. Fresh mackerel which they carried to Boston. Had four dories, and commonly fished from them. Else they fished on the starboard side aft, where their lines hung ready with the old baits on, two to a man. I had the experience of going on a mackerel cruise.

They went aboard their schooner in a leisurely way this Sunday evening, with a fair but very slight wind, the sun now setting clear and shining on the vessel after several thunder-showers. I was struck by the small

quantity of supplies which they appeared to take. We climbed aboard, and there we were in a mackerel schooner. The baits were not dry on the hooks. Winsor cast overboard the foul juice of mackerels mixed with rain-water which remained in his trough. There was the mill in which to grind up the mackerel for bait, and the trough to hold it, and the long-handled dipper to cast it overboard with; and already in the harbor we saw the surface rippled with schools of small mackerel. They proceeded leisurely to weigh anchor, and then to raise their two sails. There was one passenger, going for health or amusement, who had been to California. I had the experience of going a-mackereling, though I was landed on an island before we got out of the harbor. They expected to commence fishing the next morning. It had been a very warm day with frequent thundershowers. I had walked from Cohasset to Duxbury, and had walked about the latter town to find a passage to Clark's Island, about three miles distant, but no boat could stir, they said, at that state of the tide.[1] The tide was down, and boats were left high and dry. At length I was directed to Winsor's tavern, where perchance I might find some mackerel-fishers, who were going to sail that night to be ready for fishing in the morning, and, as they would pass near the island, they would take me. I found it so. Winsor himself was going. I told him he was the very man for me; but I must wait an hour. So I ate supper with them. Then one after another of his crew was seen straggling to the

[1] [Here he tells the story in a different form, showing an intention of using it later.]

shore, for the most part in high boots, — some made of india-rubber, — some with their pants stripped up. There were seven for this schooner, beside a passenger and myself. The leisurely manner in which they proceeded struck me. I had taken off my shoes and stockings and prepared to wade. Each of the seven took an armful of pine wood and walked with it to the two boats, which lay at high-water mark in the mud; then they resolved that each should bring one more armful and that would be enough. They had already got a barrel of water and had some more in the schooner, also a bucket of new potatoes. Then, dividing into two parties, we pulled and shoved the boats a dozen rods over the mud and water till they floated, then rowed half a mile or more over the shallow water to the little schooner and climbed aboard. Many seals had their heads out. We gathered about the helmsman and talked about the compass, which was affected by the iron in the vessel, etc., etc.[1]

Clark's Island, Sunday night. — On Friday night December 8th, O. S., the Pilgrims, exploring in the shallop, landed on Clark's Island (so called from the master's mate of the May-Flower), where they spent three nights and kept their first Sabbath. On Monday, or the 11th, O. S., they landed on the Rock. This island contains about eighty-six acres and was once covered with red cedars which were sold at Boston for gate-posts. I saw a few left, one, two feet in diameter at the ground, which was probably standing when the Pilgrims came.

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 182–184; Riv. 219–221.]

Ed. Watson, who could remember them nearly fifty years, had observed but little change in them. Hutchinson calls this one of the best islands in Massachusetts Bay. The town kept it at first as a sacred place, but finally sold it in 1690 to Samuel Lucas, Elkanah Watson, and George Morton. Saw a stag's-horn sumach five or six inches in diameter and eighteen feet high. Here was the marsh goldenrod (*Solidago lævigata*) not yet in blossom; a small bluish flower in the marshes, which they called rosemary; a kind of chenopodium which appeared distinct from the common; and a short oval-leaved, set-looking plant which I suppose is *Glaux maritima*, sea milkwort, or saltwort. Skates' eggs, called in England skate-barrows from their form, on the sand. The old cedars were flat-topped, spreading, the stratum of the wind drawn out.

July 28. *Monday morning.* Sailed [to] the Gurnet, which runs down seven miles into the bay from Marshfield. Heard the *peep* of the *beach-bird*. Saw some ring-necks in company with peeps. They told of eagles which had flown low over the island lately. Went by Saquish. Gathered a basketful of Irish moss bleached on the beach. Saw a field full of pink-blossomed potatoes at the lighthouse, remarkably luxuriant and full of blossoms; also some French barley. Old fort and barracks by lighthouse. Visited lobster houses or huts there, where they use lobsters to catch bait for lobsters. Saw on the shanties signs from ships, as "Justice Story" and "Margueritta." To obtain bait is sometimes the

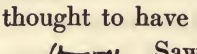
main thing. Samphire (*Salicornia*), which they pickle; also a kind of prickly samphire, which I suppose is saltwort, or *Salsola Caroliniana*. Well at Clark's Island twenty-seven and three quarters feet deep. Cut the rockweed on the rocks at low tide once in two or three years. Very valuable; more than they have time to save.

Uncle Ned told of a man who went off fishing from back of Wellfleet in calm weather, and with great difficulty got ashore through the surf. Those in the other boat, who had landed, were unwilling to take the responsibility of telling them when to pull for shore; the one who had the helm was inexperienced. They were swamped at once. So treacherous is this shore. Before the wind comes, perchance, the sea may run so as to upset and drown you on the shore. At first they thought to pull for Provincetown, but night was coming on, and that was distant many a long mile. Their case was a desperate one. When they came near the shore and saw the terrific breakers that intervened, they were deterred. They were thoroughly frightened.[1]

Were troubled with skunks on this island; they must have come over on the ice. Foxes they had seen; had killed one woodchuck; even a large *mud turtle*, which they *conjectured some bird must have dropped*. Muskrats they had seen, and killed two raccoons once. I went a-clamming just before night. This the clam-digger, borrowed of Uncle Bill (Watson) in his schooner home. The clams nearly a foot deep, but I broke many in digging. Said not to be good now, but we found them good eaten fresh. No sale for

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 157; Riv. 187, 188.]

them now; fetch twenty-five cents a bucket in their season. Barry caught squids as bait for bass. We found many dead clams, — their shells full of sand, — called sand clams.[1] By a new clam law any one can dig clams here. Brown's Island, so called, a shoal off the Gurnet, thought to have been an isle once, a dangerous place.



Saw here fences, the posts set in cross sleepers, made to be removed in winter.

The finest music in a menagerie, its wildest strains, have something in them akin to the cries of the tigers and leopards heard in their native forests. Those strains are not unfitted to the assemblage of wild beasts. They express to my ear what the tiger's stripes and the leopard's spots express to my eye; and they appear to grin with satisfaction at the sound. That nature has any place at all for music is very good.

July 29. *Tuesday.* A northeast wind with rain, but the sea is the wilder for it. I heard the surf roar on the Gurnet [in] the night, which, as Uncle Ned and Freeman said, showed that the wind would work round east and we should have rainy weather. It was the wave reaching the shore before the wind. The ocean was heaped up somewhere to the eastward, and this roar was occasioned by its effort to preserve its equilibrium. The rut of the sea.[2] In the afternoon I sailed to Plymouth, three miles, notwithstanding the drizzling rain, or "drisk," as Uncle Ned called it. We passed round the head of Plymouth beach, which is three miles long. I did not know till

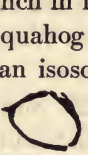
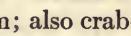
[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 109, 110; Riv. 129.]

[2] [See *Cape Cod*, pp. 97, 98; Riv. 115.]

afterward that I had landed where the Pilgrims did and passed over the Rock on Hedge's Wharf. Returning, we had more wind and tacking to do.

Saw many seals together on a flat. Singular that these strange animals should be so abundant here and yet the man who lives a few miles inland never hear of them. To him there is no report of the sea, though he may read the Plymouth paper. The Boston papers do not tell us that they have seals in the Harbor. The inhabitants of Plymouth do not seem to be aware of it. I always think of seals in connection with Esquimaux or some other outlandish people, not in connection with those who live on the shores of Boston and Plymouth harbors. Yet from their windows they may daily see a family [of] seals, the real *Phoca vitulina*, collected on a flat or sporting in the waves. I saw one dashing through the waves just ahead of our boat, going to join his companions on the bar, — as strange to me as the merman. No less wild, essentially, than when the Pilgrims came is this harbor.

It being low tide, we landed on a flat which makes out from Clark's Island, to while away the time, not being able to get quite up yet. I found numerous *large* holes of the sea clam in this sand (no small clams), and dug them out easily and rapidly with my hands. Could have got a large quantity in a short time; but here they do not eat them; think they will make you sick. They were not so deep in the sand, not more than five or six inches. I saw where one had squirted full ten feet before the wind, as appeared by the marks of the drops on the sand. Some small ones I found not more than a

quarter of an inch in length. Le Baron brought me [a] round clam or quahog alive, with a very thick shell, and not so nearly an isosceles triangle as the sea clam, — more like this:  with a protuberance on the back. The sea clam: A small, narrow clam  which they called the bank clam; also crab-cases, handsomely spotted. Small crab always in a cockle-shell if not in a case of his own. A cockle as large as my fist. Mussels, small ones, empty shells; an extensive bank where they had died. Occasionally a large deep-sea mussel, which some kelp had brought up. We caught some sand eels seven or eight inches long, — *Ammodytes tobianus*, according to Storer, and not the *A. lancea* of Yarrell, though the size of the last comes nearer. They were in the shallow pools left on the sand (the flat was here pure naked yellowish sand), and quickly buried themselves when pursued. They are used as bait for bass. Found some sand-circles or sandpaper, like top of a stone jug cut off, with a large nose; said to be made by the foot of the large cockle, which has some glutinous matter on it.[1] A circle of sand about as thick as thick pasteboard. It reminded me of the caddis-worm cases, skate-barrows, etc., etc. I observed the shell of a sea clam one valve of which was filled exactly even full with sand, — evenly as if it had been heaped and then scraped off, as when men measure by the peck. This was a fresher one of the myriad sand-clams, and it suggested to me how the stone clams which I had seen on Cape Cod might have been formed.

[1] The nidus of the animal of *Natica*, — cells with eggs in sand.

Perchance a clamshell was the mould in which they were cast, and a slight hardening of the level surface, before the whole is turned to stone, causes them to split in two. The sand was full of stone clams in the mould.[1] I saw the kelp attached to stones half as big as my head, which it had transported. I do not think I ever saw the kelp *in situ*. Also attached to a deep-sea mussel. The kelp is like a broad ruffled belt. The middle portion is thicker and flat, the edges for two or three inches thinner and fuller, so that it is fulled or ruffled, as if the edges had been hammered. The extremity is generally worn and ragged from the lashing of the waves. It is the prototype of a fringed belt. Uncle Ned said that the cows ate it.[2] We saw in the shallow water a long, *round* green grass, six or eight feet long, clogging up the channel. Round grass, I think they called it. We caught a lobster, as you might catch a mud turtle in the country, in the shallow water, pushing him ashore with the paddle, taking hold of his tail to avoid being bitten. They are obliged to put wooden plugs or wedges beside their claws to prevent their tearing each other to pieces. All weeds are bleached on the beach.

This sailing on salt water was something new to me. The boat is such a living creature, even this clumsy one sailing within five points of the wind. The sailboat is an admirable invention, by which you compel the wind to transport you even against itself. It is easier to guide than a horse; the slightest pressure on the tiller suffices. I think the inventor must have been greatly

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 109, 110 ; Riv. 129.]

[2] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 68, 69 ; Riv. 79.]

surprised, as well as delighted, at the success of his experiment. It is so contrary to expectation, as if the elements were disposed to favor you. This deep, unfordable sea! but this wind ever blowing over it to transport you! At 10 P. M. it was perfectly fair and bright starlight.

July 30. *Wednesday.* The house here stands within a grove of balm-of-Gileads, horse-chestnuts, cherries, apples, and plums, etc. Uncle Bill, who lives in his schooner, — not turned up Numidian fashion, but anchored in the mud, — whom I meant to call on yesterday morn, lo! had run over to "the Pines" last evening, fearing an easterly storm. He outrode the great gale in the spring alone in the harbor, dashing about. He goes after rockweed, lighters vessels, and saves wrecks. Now I see him lying in the mud over at the Pines in the horizon, which place he cannot leave if he will, till flood-tide; but he will not, it seems. This waiting for the tide is a singular feature in the life by the shore. In leaving your boat to-day you must always have reference to what you are going to do the next day. A frequent answer is, "Well, you can't start for two hours yet." It is something new to a landsman, and at first he is not disposed to wait.[1] I saw some heaps of shells left by the Indians near the northern end of the island. They were a rod in diameter and a foot or more high in the middle, and covered with a shorter and greener grass than the surrounding field. Found one imperfect arrowhead.

At 10 A. M. sailed to Webster's, past Powder Point in

[1] [*Cape Cod*, pp. 141, 142; Riv. 168, 169.]

Duxbury. We could see his land from the island. I was steersman and learned the meaning of some nautical phrases, — "luff," to keep the boat close to the wind till the sails begin to flap; "bear away," to put the sail more at right angles with the wind; a "close haul," when the sails are brought and belayed nearly or quite in a line with the vessel. On the marshes we saw patches of a "*black* grass." A large field of wheat at Webster's, — half a dozen acres at least, — many apple trees, three-thorned acacias, tulip-trees; cranberry experiment; seaweed spread under his tomatoes. Wild geese with black and gray heads and necks, not so heavy and clumsy as the tame Bremens. Large, noisy Hongkong geese. Handsome calves. Three thousand (?) acres of marsh.

Talked with Webster's nearest neighbor, Captain Hewit, whose small farm he surrounds and endeavors in vain to buy. A fair specimen of a retired Yankee sea-captain turned farmer. Proud of the quantity of carrots he had raised on a small patch. It was better husbandry than Webster's. He told a story of his buying a cargo for his owners at St. Petersburg just as peace was declared in the last war. These men are not so remarkable for anything as the quality of hardness. The very fixedness and rigidity of their jaws and necks express a sort of adamantine hardness. This is what they have learned by contact with the elements. The man who does not grow rigid with years and experience! Where is he? What avails it to grow hard merely? The harder you are, the more brittle really, like the bones of the old. How much rarer and better to grow

mellow! A sort of stone fruit the man bears commonly; a bare stone it is, without any sweet and mellow pericarp around it. It is like the peach which has dried to the stone as the season advanced; it is dwindled to a dry stone with its almond. In presence of one of these hard men I think: "How brittle! How easily you would crack! What a poor and lame conclusion!" I can think of nothing but a stone in his head. Truly genial men do not grow [hard]. It is the result of despair, this attitude of resistance. They behave like men already driven to the wall. Notwithstanding that the speaker trembles with infirmity while he speaks, — his hand on the spade, — it is such a trembling as betrays a stony nature. His hand trembles so that the full glass of cider which he prizes to a drop will have lost half its contents before it reaches his lips, as if a tempest had arisen in it. Hopelessly hard. But there is another view of him. He is somebody. He has an opinion to express, if you will wait to hear him. A certain manliness and refreshing resistance is in him. He generally makes Webster a call, but Webster does not want to see you more than twenty minutes. It does not take him long to say all he has got to say. He had not seen him to speak to him since he had come home this time. He had sent him over a couple of fine cod the night before. Such a man as Hewit sees not finely but coarsely.

The eagle given by Lawrence on the hill in the buckwheat field.

July 31. *Thursday.* Those same round shells (*Scutella parma* (*placenta*) ?) on the sand as at Cape Cod, the

live ones reddish, the dead white. Went off early this morning with Uncle Ned to catch bass with the small fish I had found on the sand the night before. Two of his neighbor Albert Watson's boys were there, — not James, the oldest, but Edward, the sailor, and Mortimer (or Mort), — in their boat. They killed some striped bass (*Labrax lineatus*) with paddles in a shallow creek in the sand, and caught some lobsters. I remarked that the seashore was singularly clean, for, notwithstanding the spattering of the water and mud and squirting of the clams and wading to and fro the boat, my best black pants retained no stains nor dirt, as they would acquire from walking in the country. I caught a bass with a young — haik? (perchance), trailing thirty feet behind while Uncle Ned paddled. They catch them in England with a "trawl-net." Sometimes they weigh seventy-five pounds here.

At 11 A. M. set sail to Plymouth. We went somewhat out of a direct course, to take advantage of the tide, which was coming in. Saw the site of the first house, which was burned, on Leyden Street. Walked up the same, parallel with the Town Brook. Hill from which Billington Sea was discovered hardly a mile from the shore, on Watson's grounds. Watson's Hill, where treaty was made across brook south of Burying Hill. At Watson's,[1] the oriental plane, *Abies Douglasii*, ginkgo tree (*q. v.* on Common), a foreign hardhack, English oak (dark-colored, small leaf), Spanish chest-

[1] [Marston Watson, Thoreau's friend and correspondent. See *Familiar Letters, passim*, and especially note to letter of April 25, 1858.]

nut, Chinese arbor-vitæ, Norway spruce (like our fir balsam), a new kind of fir balsam. Black eagle one of the good cherries. Fuchsias in hothouse. Earth bank covered with cement.

Mr. Thomas Russell, who cannot be seventy, at whose house on Leyden Street I took tea and spent the evening, told me that he remembered to have seen Ebenezer Cobb, a native of Plymouth, who died in Kingston in 1801, aged one hundred and seven, who remembered to have had personal knowledge of Peregrine White, saw him an old man riding on horseback (he lived to be eighty-three). White was born at Cape Cod Harbor before the Pilgrims got to Plymouth. C. Sturgis's mother told me the same of herself at the same time. She remembered Cobb sitting in an arm chair like the one she herself occupied, with his silver locks falling about his shoulders, twirling one thumb over the other. Lyell in first volume, "Second Visit," page 97, published 1849,[1] says: "Colonel Perkins, of Boston, . . . informed me, in 1846, that there was but one link wanting in the chain of personal communication between him and Peregrine White, the first white child born in Massachusetts, a few days after the Pilgrims landed. White lived to an advanced age, and was known to a man of the name of Cobb, whom Colonel Perkins visited, in 1807, with some friends who yet survive. Cobb died in 1808, the year after Colonel Perkins saw him."

Russell told me that he once bought some *primitive* woodland in Plymouth which was sold at auction —

[1] [Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States.*]

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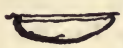
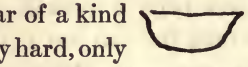
[1] See Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*.

Town Brook, Plymouth

the biggest pitch pines two feet diameter — for *eight shillings* an acre. If he had bought enough, it would have been a fortune. There is still forest in this town which the axe has not touched, says George Bradford. According to Thatcher's History of Plymouth, there were 11,662 acres of woodland in 1831, or twenty square miles. Pilgrims first saw Billington Sea about January 1st; visited it January 8th. The oldest stone in the Plymouth Burying Ground, 1681. (Coles (?) Hill, where those who died the first winter were buried, is said to have been levelled and sown to conceal loss from Indians.) Oldest on our hill, 1677. In Mrs. Plympton's garden on Leyden Street, running down to Town Brook, saw an abundance of pears, gathered excellent June-eating apples, saw a large lilac about eight inches diameter. Methinks a soil may improve when at length it has shaded itself with vegetation.

William S. Russell, the registrar at the court-house, showed the oldest town records, for all are preserved. On first page a plan of Leyden Street dated December, 1620, with names of settlers. They have a great many folios. The writing plain. Saw the charter granted by the Plymouth Company to the Pilgrims, signed by Warwick, dated 1629, and the box in which it was brought over, with the seal.

Pilgrim Hall. They used to crack off pieces of the Forefathers' Rock for visitors with a cold chisel, till the town forbade it. The stone remaining at wharf is about seven feet square. Saw two old armchairs that came over in the Mayflower, the large picture by Sargent, Standish's sword, gun-barrel with which Philip

was killed, mug and pocket-book of Clark the mate, iron pot of Standish, old pipe-tongs. Indian relics: a  flayer; a pot or mortar of a kind  of fire-proof stone, very hard, only seven or eight inches long. A commission from Cromwell to Winslow (?), his signature torn off. They talk of a monument on the Rock. The Burying Hill 165 feet high. Manomet 394 feet high by State map. Saw more pears at Washburn's garden. No graves of Pilgrims.

Seaweed generally used along shore. Saw the *Prinos glabra*, ink-berry, at Billington Sea. Sandy plain with oaks of various kinds cut in less than twenty years. No communication with Sandwich. Plymouth end of world; fifty miles thither by railroad. Old Colony road poor property. Nothing saves Plymouth but the Rock. Fern-leaved beach.

Saw the king crab (*Limulus polyphemus*), horseshoe and saucepan fish, at the Island, covered with sea-green and buried in the sand for concealment.

In Plymouth the *Convolvulus arvensis*, small bindweed.

VII

AUGUST, 1851

(ÆT. 34)

Left [Plymouth] at 9 A. M., August 1st. After Kingston came Plympton, Halifax, and Hanson, all level with frequent cedar swamps, especially the last, — also in Weymouth.

Desor and Cabot think the jellyfish *Oceania tubulosa* are buds from a polyp of genus *Syncoryne*. Desor, accounting for suspended moisture or fogs over sand-banks (or shoals), says, the heat being abstracted by radiation, the moisture is condensed in form of fog.

Lieutenant Walsh lost his lead and wire when 34,200 [feet], or more than six statute miles, had run out perpendicularly.

I could make a list of things ill-managed. We Yankees do not deserve our fame. *Viz.* [*sic*]: —

I went to a menagerie the other day, advertised by a flaming show-bill as big as a barn-door. The proprietors had taken wonderful pains to collect rare and interesting animals from all parts of the world, and then placed by them a few stupid and ignorant fellows, coachmen or stablers, who knew little or nothing about the animals and were unwilling even to communicate the little they knew. You catch a rare creature, interesting to all mankind, and then place the first biped

that comes along, with but a grain more reason in him, to exhibit and describe the former. At the expense of millions, this rare quadruped from the sun [*sic*] is obtained, and then Jack Halyard or Tom Coach-whip is hired to explain it. Why all this pains taken to catch in Africa, and no pains taken to exhibit in America? Not a cage was labelled. There was nobody to tell us how or where the animals were caught, or what they were. Probably the proprietors themselves do not know, — or what their habits are. They told me that a hyena came from South America. But hardly had we been ushered into the presence of this choice, this admirable collection, than a ring was formed for Master Jack and the pony! Were they *animals*, then, who had caught and exhibited these, and who had come to see these? Would it not be worth the while to learn something? to have some information imparted? The absurdity of importing the behemoth, and then, instead of somebody appearing [to] tell which it is, to have to *while away the time*, — though your curiosity is growing desperate to learn one fact about the creature, — to have Jack and the pony introduced ! ! ! Why, I expected to see some descendant of Cuvier there, to improve this opportunity for a lecture on natural history!

That is what they should do, — make this an occasion for communicating some solid information. That would be fun alive! that would be a sunny day, a sun day, in one's existence, not a secular day of Shetland ponies. Not Jack and his pony and a tintamarre of musical instruments, and a man with his head in the lion's mouth. First let him prove that he has got a

head on his shoulders. I go not there to see a man hug a lion or fondle a tiger, but to learn how he is related to the wild beast. There 'll be All-Fools' days enough without our creating any intentionally. The presumption is that men wish to behave like reasonable creatures; that they do not need, and are not seeking, relaxation; that they are not dissipated. Let it be a travelling zoölogical garden, with a travelling professor to accompany it. At present, foolishly, the professor goes alone with his poor painted illustrations of animals, while the menagerie takes another road, without its professor, — only its keepers, stupid coachmen.

I. M. June [?] & Co., or Van Amburgh & Co., are engaged in a pecuniary speculation in which certain wild beasts are used as the counters. Cuvier & Co. are engaged in giving a course of lectures on Natural History. Now why could they not put head and means together for the benefit of mankind, and still get their living? The present institution is imperfect precisely because its object is to enrich Van Amburgh & Co., and their low aim unfits them for rendering any more valuable service; but no doubt the most valuable course would also be the most valuable in a pecuniary sense. No doubt a low self-interest is a better motive force to these enterprises than no interest at all; but a high self-interest, which consists with the greatest advantage of all, would be a better still.

Item 2nd: Why have we not a decent pocket-map of the State of Massachusetts? There is the large map. Why is it not cut into half a dozen sheets and folded into a small cover for the pocket? Are there no travellers

to use it? Well, to tell the truth, there are but few, and that's the reason why. Men go by railroad, and State maps hanging in bar-rooms are small enough. The State has been admirably surveyed at a great cost, and yet Dearborn's Pocket-Map is the best one we have!

Aug. 4. Now the hardhack and meadow-sweet reign, the former one of our handsomest flowers, I think. The mayweed, too, dusty by the roadside, and in the fields I scent the sweet-scented life-everlasting, which is half expanded. The grass is withered by the drought. The potatoes begin generally to flat down. The corn is tasselled out; its crosses show in all fields above the blades. The turnips are growing in its midst.

As my eye rested on the blossom of the meadow-sweet in a hedge, I heard the note of an autumnal cricket, and was penetrated with the sense of autumn. Was it sound? or was it form? or was it scent? or was it flavor? It is now the royal month of August. When I hear this sound, I am as dry as the rye which is everywhere cut and housed, though I am drunk with the season's wine.

The farmer is the most inoffensive of men, with his barns and cattle and poultry and grain and grass. I like the smell of his hay well enough, though as grass it may be in my way.

The yellow Bethlehem-star still, and the yellow gerardia, and a bluish "savory-leaved aster."

Aug. 5. 7.30 P. M. — Moon half full. I sit beside Hubbard's Grove. A few level red bars above the horizon;

a dark, irregular bank beneath them, with a streak of red sky below, on the horizon's edge. This will describe many a sunset. It is 8 o'clock. The farmer has driven in his cows, and is cutting an armful of green corn fodder for them. Another is still patching the roof of his barn, making his hammer heard afar in the twilight, as if he took a satisfaction in his elevated work, — sitting astride the ridge, — which he wished to prolong. The robin utters a sort of cackling note, as if he had learned the ways of man. The air is still. I hear the voices of loud-talking boys in the early twilight, it must be a mile off. The swallows go over with a watery twittering.

When the moon is on the increase and half full, it is already in mid-heavens at sunset, so that there is no marked twilight intervening. I hear the whip-poor-will at a distance, but they are few of late.

It is almost dark. I hear the voices of berry-pickers coming homeward from Bear Garden. Why do they go home, as it were defeated by the approaching night? Did it never occur to them to stay overnight? The wind now rising from over Bear Garden Hill falls gently on my ear and delivers its message, the same that I have so often heard passing over bare and stony mountain-tops, so uncontaminated and untamed is the wind. The air that has swept over Caucasus and the sands of Arabia comes to breathe on New England fields. The dogs bark; they are not as much stiller as man. They are on the alert, suspecting the approach of foes. The darkness perchance affects them, makes them mad and wild. The mosquitoes hum about me. I distinguish the modest moonlight on my paper.

As the twilight deepens and the moonlight is more and more bright, I begin to distinguish myself, who I am and where; as my walls contract, I become more collected and composed, and sensible of my own existence, as when a lamp is brought into a dark apartment and I see who the company are. With the coolness and the mild silvery light, I recover some sanity, my thoughts are more distinct, moderated, and tempered. Reflection is more possible while the day goes by. The intense light of the sun unfits me for meditation, makes me wander in my thought; my life is too diffuse and dissipated; routine succeeds and prevails over us; the trivial has greater power then, and most at noonday, the most trivial hour of the twenty-four. I am sobered by the moonlight. I bethink myself. It is like a cup of cold water to a thirsty man. The moonlight is more favorable to meditation than sunlight.

The sun lights this world from without, shines in at a window, but the moon is like a lamp within an apartment. It shines for us. The stars themselves make a more visible, and hence a nearer and more domestic, roof at night. Nature broods us, and has not left our germs of thought to be hatched by the sun. We feel her heat and see her body darkening over us. Our thoughts are not dissipated, but come back to us like an echo.

The different kinds of moonlight are infinite. This is not a night for contrasts of light and shade, but a faint diffused light in which there is light enough to travel, and that is all.

A road (the Corner road) that passes over the height

of land between earth and heaven, separating those streams which flow earthward from those which flow heavenward.

Ah, what a poor, dry compilation is the "Annual of Scientific Discovery!" I trust that observations are made during the year which are not chronicled there, — that some mortal may have caught a glimpse of Nature in some corner of the earth during the year 1851. One sentence of perennial poetry would make me forget, would atone for, volumes of mere science. The astronomer is as blind to the significant phenomena, or the significance of phenomena, as the wood-sawyer who wears glasses to defend his eyes from sawdust. The question is not what you look at, but what you see.

I hear now from Bear Garden Hill — I rarely walk by moonlight without hearing — the sound of a flute, or a horn, or a human voice. It is a performer I never see by day; should not recognize him if pointed out; but you may hear his performance in every horizon. He plays but one strain and goes to bed early, but I know by the character of that single strain that he is deeply dissatisfied with the manner in which he spends his day. He is a slave who is purchasing his freedom. He is Apollo watching the flocks of Admetus on every hill, and this strain he plays every evening to remind him of his heavenly descent. It is all that saves him, — his one redeeming trait. It is a reminiscence; he loves to remember his youth. He is sprung of a noble family. He is highly related, I have no doubt; was tenderly nurtured in his infancy, poor hind as he is. That noble strain he utters, instead of any jewel on his finger, or precious

locket fastened to his breast, or purple garments that came with him. The elements recognize him, and echo his strain. All the dogs know him their master, though lords and ladies, rich men and learned, know him not. He is the son of a rich man, of a famous man who served his country well. He has heard his sire's stories. I thought of the time when he would discover his parentage, obtain his inheritance and sing a strain suited to the morning hour. He cherishes hopes. I never see the man by day who plays that clarionet.

The distant lamps in the farmhouse look like fires. The trees and clouds are seen at a distance reflected in the river as by day. I see Fair Haven Pond from the Cliffs, as it were through a slight mist. It is the wildest scenery imaginable, — a Lake of the Woods. I just remembered the wildness of St. Anne's. That's the Ultima Thule of wildness to me.

What an entertainment for the traveller, this incessant motion apparently of the moon traversing the clouds! Whether you sit or stand, it is always preparing new developments for you. It is event enough for simple minds. You all alone, the moon all alone, overcoming with incessant victory whole squadrons of clouds above the forests and the lakes and rivers and the mountains. You cannot always calculate which one the moon will undertake next.[1]

I see a solitary firefly over the woods.

The moon wading through clouds; though she is eclipsed by this one, I see her shining on a more distant

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405. See also pp. 383–385 of this volume.]

but lower one. The entrance into Hubbard's Wood above the spring, coming from the hill, is like the entrance to a cave; but when you are within, there are some streaks of light on the edge of the path.

All these leaves so still, none whispering, no birds in motion, — how can I be else than still and thoughtful?

Aug. 6. The motions of circus horses are not so expressive of music, do not harmonize so well with a strain of music, as those of animals of the cat kind. An Italian has just carried a hand-organ through the village. I hear it even at Walden Wood. It is as if a cheeta had skulked, howling, through the streets of the village, with knotted tail, and left its perfume there.

Neglected gardens are full of fleabane (?) now, not yet in blossom. Thoroughwort has opened, and goldenrod is gradually opening. The smooth sumach shows its red fruit. The berries of the bristly aralia are turning dark. The wild holly's scarlet fruit is seen and the red cherry (*Cerasus*). After how few steps, how little exertion, the student stands in pine woods above the Solomon's-seal and the cow-wheat, in a place still unaccountably strange and wild to him, and to all civilization! This so easy and so common, though our literature implies that it is rare! We in the country make no report of the seals and sharks in our neighborhood to those in the city. We send them only our huckleberries, not free wild thoughts.

Why does not man sleep all day as well as all night,

it seems so very natural and easy? For what is he awake?

A man must generally get away some hundreds or thousands of miles from home before he can be said to begin his travels. Why not begin his travels at home? Would he have to go far or look very closely to discover novelties? The traveller who, in this sense, pursues his travels at home, has the advantage at any rate of a long residence in the country to make his observations correct and profitable. Now the American goes to England, while the Englishman comes to America, in order to describe the country. No doubt there [are] some advantages in this kind of mutual criticism. But might there not be invented a better way of coming at the truth than this scratch-my-back-and-I-'ll-scratch-yours method? Would not the American, for instance, who had himself, perchance, travelled in England and elsewhere make the most profitable and accurate traveller in his own country? How often it happens that the traveller's principal distinction is that he is one who knows less about a country than a native! Now if he should begin with all the knowledge of a native, and add thereto the knowledge of a traveller, both natives and foreigners would be obliged to read his book; and the world would be absolutely benefited. It takes a man of genius to travel in his own country, in his native village; to make any progress between his door and his gate. But such a traveller will make the distances which Hanno and Marco Polo and Cook and Ledyard went over ridiculous. So worthy a traveller as William Bartram heads his first chapter with the words, "The author

sets sail from Philadelphia, and arrives at Charleston, from whence he begins his travels."

I am, perchance, most and most profitably interested in the things which I already know a little about; a mere and utter novelty is a mere monstrosity to me. I am interested to see the yellow pine, which we have not in Concord, though Michaux says it grows in Massachusetts; or the Oriental plane, having often heard of it and being well acquainted with its sister, the Occidental plane; or the English oak, having heard of the royal oak and having oaks ourselves; but the new Chinese flower, whose cousin I do not happen to know, I pass by with indifference. I do not know that I am very fond of novelty. I wish to get a clearer notion of what I have already some inkling.

These Italian boys with their hand-organs remind me of the keepers of wild beasts in menageries, whose whole art consists in stirring up their beasts from time to time with a pole. I am reminded of bright flowers and glancing birds and striped pards of the jungle; these delicious harmonies tear me to pieces while they charm me. The tiger's musical smile.

How some inventions have spread! Some, brought to perfection by the most enlightened nations, have been surely and rapidly communicated to the most savage. The gun, for instance. How soon after the settlement of America were comparatively remote Indian tribes, most of whose members had never seen a white man, supplied with guns! The gun is invented by the civilized man, and the savage in remote wildernesses on the other side of the globe throws away his bow and

arrows and takes up this arm. Bartram, travelling in the Southern States between 1770 and 1780, describes the warriors as so many gun-men.

Ah, yes, even here in Concord horizon Apollo is at work for King Admetus! Who is King Admetus? It is Business, with his four prime ministers Trade and Commerce and Manufactures and Agriculture. And this is what makes mythology true and interesting to us.

Aug. 8. 7.30 P. M. — To Conantum.

The moon has not yet quite filled her horns. I perceive why we so often remark a dark cloud in the west at and after sunset. It is because it is almost directly between us and the sun, and hence we see the dark side, and moreover it is much darker than it otherwise would be, because of the little light reflected from the earth at that hour. The same cloud at midday and overhead might not attract attention. There is a pure amber sky beneath the present bank, thus framed off from the rest of the heavens, which, with the outlines of small dead elms seen against it, — I hardly know if far or near, — make picture enough. Men will travel far to see less interesting sights than this. Turning away from the sun, we get this enchanting view, as when a man looks at the landscape with inverted head. Under shadow of the dark cloud which I have described, the cricket begins his strain, his ubiquitous strain. Is there a fall cricket distinct from the species we hear in spring and summer? I smell the corn-field over the brook a dozen rods off, and it reminds me of the green-corn feasts of the Indians. The evening train comes rolling

in, but none of the passengers jumping out in such haste attend to the beautiful, fresh picture which Nature has unrolled in the west and surmounted with that dark frame. The circular platter of the carrot's blossom is now perfect.

Might not this be called the Invalid's Moon, on account of the warmth of the nights? The principal employment of the farmers now seems to be getting their meadow-hay and cradling some oats, etc.

The light from the western sky is stronger still than that of the moon, and when I hold up my hand, the west side is lighted while the side toward the moon is comparatively dark. But now that I have put this dark wood (Hubbard's) between me and the west, I see the moonlight plainly on my paper; I am even startled by it. One star, too, — is it Venus? — I see in the west. Starlight! that would be a good way to mark the hour, if we were precise. Hubbard's Brook. How much the beauty of the moon is enhanced by being seen shining between two trees, or even by the neighborhood of clouds! I hear the clock striking eight faintly. I smell the late shorn meadows.

One will lose no music by not attending the oratorios and operas. The really inspiring melodies are cheap and universal, and are as audible to the poor man's son as to the rich man's. Listening to the harmonies of the universe is not allied to dissipation. My neighbors have gone to the vestry to hear "Ned Kendal," the bugler, to-night, but I am come forth to the hills to hear my bugler in the horizon. I can forego the seeming advantages of cities without misgiving. No heavenly strain is

lost to the ear that is fitted to hear it, for want of money or opportunity. I am convinced that for instrumental music all Vienna cannot serve me more than the Italian boy who seeks my door with his organ.

And now I strike the road at the causeway. It is hard, and I hear the sound of my steps, a sound which should never be heard, for it draws down my thoughts. It is more like the treadmill exercise. The fireflies are not so numerous as they have been. There is no dew as yet. The planks and railing of Hubbard's Bridge are removed. I walk over on the string-pieces, resting in the middle until the moon comes out of a cloud, that I may see my path, for between the next piers the string-pieces also are removed and there is only a rather narrow plank, let down three or four feet. I essay to cross it, but it springs a little and I mistrust myself, whether I shall not plunge into the river. Some demonic genius seems to be warning me. Attempt not the passage; you will surely be drowned. It is very real that I am thus affected. Yet I am fully aware of the absurdity of minding such suggestions. I put out my foot, but I am checked, as if that power had laid a hand on my breast and chilled me back. Nevertheless, I cross, stooping at first, and gain the other side. (I make the most of it on account of the admonition, but it was nothing to remark on. I returned the same way two hours later and made nothing of it.) It is easy to see how, by yielding to such feelings as this, men would reëstablish all the superstitions of antiquity. It is best that reason should govern us, and not these blind intimations, in which we exalt our fears into a genius.

On Conantum I sit awhile in the shade of the woods and look out on the moonlit fields. White rocks are more remarkable than by day.[1]

The air is warmer than the rocks now. It is perfectly warm and I am tempted to stay out all night and observe each phenomenon of the night until day dawns. But if I should do so, I should not wonder if the town were raised to hunt me up. I could lie out here on this pinnacle rock all night without cold. To lie here on your back with nothing between your eye and the stars, — nothing but space, — they your nearest neighbors on that side, be they strange or be they tame, be they other worlds or merely ornaments to this, who could ever go to sleep under these circumstances? Sitting on the doorstep of Conant house at 9 o'clock, I hear a pear drop. How few of all the apples that fall do we hear fall! I hear a horse *sneeze* (?) from time to time in his pasture. He sees me and knows me to be a man, though I do not see him. I hear the nine o'clock bell ringing in Bedford. An unexpectedly musical sound that of a bell in the horizon always is. Pleasantly sounds the voice of one village to another. It is sweet as it is rare. Since I sat here a bright star has gone behind the stem of a tree, proving that my machine is moving, — proving it better for me than a rotating pendulum. I hear a solitary whip-poor-will, and a bullfrog on the river, — fewer sounds than in spring. The gray cliffs across the river are plain to be seen.

And now the star appears on the other side of the tree, and I must go. Still no dew up here. I see three

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 402.]

scythes hanging on an apple tree. There is the wild apple tree where hangs the forgotten scythe,[1] — the rock where the shoe was left. The woods and the separate trees cast longer shadows than by day, for the moon goes lower in her course at this season. Some dew at last in the meadow. As I recross the string-pieces of the bridge, I see the water-bugs swimming briskly in the moonlight. I scent the Roman wormwood in the potato-fields.

Aug. 9. *Saturday.* Tansy now in bloom and the fresh white clethra. Among the pines and birches I hear the invisible locust. As I am going to the pond to bathe, I see a black cloud in the northern horizon and hear the muttering of thunder, and make haste. Before I have bathed and dressed, the gusts which precede the tempest are heard roaring in the woods, and the first black, gusty clouds have reached my zenith. Hastening toward town, I meet the rain at the edge of the wood, and take refuge under the thickest leaves, where not a drop reaches me, and, at the end of half an hour, the renewed singing of the birds alone advertises me that the rain has ceased, and it is only the dripping from the leaves which I hear in the woods. It was a splendid sunset that day, a celestial light on all the land, so that all people went to their doors and windows to look on the grass and leaves and buildings and the sky, and it was equally glorious in whatever quarter you looked; a sort of fulgor as of stereotyped lightning filled the air. Of which this is my solution. We were in the westernmost edge of

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 317; Riv. 389.]

the shower at the moment the sun was setting, and its rays shone through the cloud and the falling rain. We were, in fact, in a rainbow and it was here its arch rested on the earth. At a little distance we should have seen all the colors.

The *Œnothera biennis* along the railroad now. Do the cars disperse seeds? The *Trichostema dichotomum* is quite beautiful now in the cool of the morning. The epilobium in the woods still. Now the earliest apples begin to be ripe, but none are so good to eat as some to smell. Some knurly apple which I pick up in the road reminds me by its fragrance of all the wealth of Pomona.[1]

Aug. 12. *Tuesday.* 1.30 A. M. — Full moon. Arose and went to the river and bathed, stepping very carefully not to disturb the household, and still carefully in the street not to disturb the neighbors. I did not walk naturally and freely till I had got over the wall. Then to Hubbard's Bridge at 2 A. M. There was a whip-poor-will in the road just beyond Goodwin's, which flew up and lighted on the fence and kept alighting on the fence within a rod of me and circling round me with a slight squeak as if inquisitive about me. I do not remember what I observed or thought in coming hither.

The traveller's whole employment is to calculate what cloud will obscure the moon and what she will triumph over. In the after-midnight hours the traveller's sole companion is the moon. All his thoughts are centred in her. She is waging continual war with the clouds

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 295; Riv. 362.]

in his behalf. What cloud will enter the lists with her next, this employs his thoughts; and when she enters on a clear field of great extent in the heavens, and shines unobstructedly, he is glad. And when she has fought her way through all the squadrons of her foes, and rides majestic in a clear sky, he cheerfully and confidently pursues his way, and rejoices in his heart. But if he sees that she has many new clouds to contend with, he pursues his way moodily, as one disappointed and aggrieved; he resents it as an injury to himself. It is his employment to watch the moon, the companion and guide of his journey, wading through clouds, and calculate what one is destined to shut out her cheering light. He traces her course, now almost completely obscured, through the ranks of her foes, and calculates where she will issue from them.[1] He is disappointed and saddened when he sees that she has many clouds to contend with.

Sitting on the sleepers of Hubbard's Bridge, which is being repaired, now, 3 o'clock A. M., I hear a cock crow. How admirably adapted to the dawn is that sound! as if made by the first rays of light rending the darkness, the creaking of the sun's axle heard already over the eastern hills.

Though man's life is trivial and handselled, Nature is holy and heroic. With what infinite faith and promise and moderation begins each new day! It is only a little after 3 o'clock, and already there is evidence of morning in the sky.

He rejoices when the moon comes forth from the

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405, 406. See also p. 374 of this volume.]

squadrons of the clouds unscathed and there are no more any obstructions in her path, and the cricket also seems to express joy in his song. It does not concern men who are asleep in their beds, but it is very important to the traveller, whether the moon shines bright and unobstructed or is obscured by clouds. It is not easy to realize the serene joy of all the earth when the moon commences to shine unobstructedly, unless you have often been a traveller by night.[1]

The traveller also resents it if the wind rises and rustles the leaves or ripples the water and increases the coolness at such an hour.

A solitary horse in his pasture was scared by the sudden sight of me, an apparition to him, standing still in the moonlight, and moved about, inspecting with alarm, but I spoke and he heard the sound of my voice; he was at once reassured and expressed his pleasure by wagging his stump of a tail, though still half a dozen rods off. How wholesome the taste of huckleberries, when now by moonlight I feel for them amid the bushes!

And now the first signs of morning attract the traveller's attention, and he cannot help rejoicing, and the moon begins gradually to fade from his recollection. The wind rises and rustles the copses. The sand is cool on the surface but warm two or three inches beneath, and the rocks are quite warm to the hand, so that he sits on them or leans against them for warmth, though indeed it is not cold elsewhere.[2] As I walk along the side of Fair Haven Hill, I see a ripple on the river, and

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405, 406.]

[2] [See *Excursions*, p. 328; Riv. 403.]

now the moon has gone behind a large and black mass of clouds, and I realize that I may not see her again in her glory this night, that perchance ere she rises from this obscurity, the sun will have risen, and she will appear but as a cloud herself, and sink unnoticed into the west (being a little after full (a day?)). As yet no sounds of awakening men; only the more frequent crowing of cocks, still standing on their perches in the barns. The milkmen are the earliest risers, — though I see no lanthorns carried to their barns in the distance, — preparing to carry the milk of cows in their tin cans for men's breakfasts, even for those who dwell in distant cities. In the twilight now, by the light of the stars alone, the moon being concealed, they are pressing the bounteous streams from full udders into their milk-pails, and the sound of the streaming milk is all that breaks the sacred stillness of the dawn; distributing their milk to such as have no cows. I perceive no mosquitoes now. Are they vespertinal, like the singing of the whip-poor-will? I see the light of the obscured moon reflected from the river brightly. With what mild emphasis Nature marks the spot! — so bright and serene a sheen that does not more contrast with the night.

4 A. M. — It adds a charm, a dignity, a glory, to the earth to see the light of the moon reflected from her streams. There are but us three, the moon, the earth which wears this jewel (the moon's reflection) in her crown, and myself. Now there has come round the Cliff (on which I sit), which faces the west, all unobserved and mingled with the dusky sky of night, a lighter and more ethereal living blue, whispering of the sun

still far, far away, behind the horizon. From the summit of our atmosphere, perchance, he may already be seen by soaring spirits that inhabit those thin upper regions, and they communicate the glorious intelligence to us lower ones. The real *divine*, the heavenly, blue, the Jove-containing air, it is, I see through this dusky lower stratum. The sun gilding the summits of the air. The broad artery of light flows over all the sky. Yet not without sadness and compassion I reflect that I shall not see the moon again in her glory. (Not far from four, still in the night, I heard a nighthawk squeak and *boom*, high in the air, as I sat on the Cliff. What is said about this being less of a night bird than the whip-poor-will is perhaps to be questioned. For neither do I remember to have heard the whip-poor-will *sing* at 12 o'clock, though I met one sitting and flying between two and three this morning. I believe that both may be heard at midnight, though very rarely.) Now at *very earliest* dawn the nighthawk booms and the whip-poor-will sings. Returning down the hill by the path to where the woods [are] cut off, I see the signs of the day, the morning red. There is the lurid morning star, soon to be blotted out by a cloud.

There is an early redness in the east which I was not prepared for, changing to amber or saffron, with clouds beneath in the horizon and also above this clear streak.

The birds utter a few languid and yawning notes, as if they had not left their perches, so sensible to light to wake so soon, — a faint peeping sound from I know not what kind, a slight, innocent, half-awake sound, like the sounds which a quiet housewife makes in the

earliest dawn. Nature preserves her innocence like a beautiful child. I hear a wood thrush even now, long before sunrise, as in the heat of the day. And the pewee and the catbird and the vireo, red-eyed? I do not hear — or do not mind, perchance — the crickets now. Now whip-poor-wills commence to sing in earnest, considerably *after* the wood thrush. The wood thrush, that beautiful singer, inviting the day once more to enter his pine woods. (So you may hear the wood thrush and whip-poor-will at the same time.) Now go by two whip-poor-wills, in haste seeking some coverts from the eye of day. And the bats are flying about on the edge of the wood, improving the last moments of their day in catching insects. The moon appears at length, not yet as a cloud, but with a frozen light, ominous of her fate. The early cars sound like a wind in the woods. The chewinks make a business now of waking each other up with their low *yorrick* in the neighboring low copse. The sun would have shown before but for the cloud. Now, on his rising, not the clear sky, but the cheeks of the clouds high and wide, are tinged with red, which, like the sky before, turns gradually to saffron and then to the white light of day.

The nettle-leaved vervain (*Verbena urticifolia*) by roadside at Emerson's. What we have called hemp answers best to *Urtica dioica*, large stinging nettle? Now the great sunflower's golden disk is seen.

The days for some time have been sensibly shorter; there is time for music in the evening.

I see polygonums in blossom by roadside, white and red.

A eupatorium from Hubbard's Bridge causeway answers to *E. purpureum*, except in these doubtful points, that the former has four leaves in a whorl, is unequally serrate, the stem is *nearly* filled with a thin pith, the corymb is not merely terminal, florets eight and nine. Differs from *verticillatum* in the stem being not solid, and I perceive no difference between calyx and corolla in color, if I know what the two are. It may be one of the intermediate varieties referred to.

Aug. 15. *Friday. Hypericum Canadense*, Canadian St. John's-wort, distinguished by its red capsules. The petals shine under the microscope, as if they had a golden dew on them.

Cnicus pumilus, pasture thistle. How many insects a single one attracts! While you sit by it, bee after bee will visit it, and busy himself probing for honey and loading himself with pollen, regardless of your overshadowing presence. He sees its purple flower from afar, and that use there is in its color.

Oxalis stricta, upright wood-sorrel, the little yellow ternate-leaved flower in pastures and corn-fields.

Sagittaria sagittifolia, or arrowhead. It has very little root that I can find to eat.

Campanula crinoides, var. 2nd, slender bellflower, vine-like like a galium, by brook-side in Depot Field.

Impatiens, noli-me-tangere, or touch-me-not, with its dangling yellow pitchers or horns of plenty, which I have seen for a month by damp causeway thickets, but the whole plant was so tender and drooped so soon I could not get it home.

May I love and revere myself above all the gods that men have ever invented. May I never let the vestal fire go out in my recesses.

Aug. 16. *Agrimonia Eupatoria*, small-flowered (yellow) plant with hispid fruit, two or three feet high, Turnpike, at Tuttle's peat meadow. Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*), said by Gray to have been introduced; not named by Bigelow. Is it not a native?

It is true man can and does live by preying on other animals, but this is a miserable way of sustaining himself, and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race, along with Prometheus and Christ, who shall teach men to live on a more innocent and wholesome diet. Is it not already acknowledged to be a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal? [1]

Aug. 17. For a day or two it has been quite cool, a coolness that was felt even when sitting by an open window in a thin coat on the west side of the house in the morning, and you naturally sought the sun at that hour. The coolness concentrated your thought, however. As I could not command a sunny window, I went abroad on the morning of the 15th and lay in the sun in the fields in my thin coat, though it was rather cool even there. I feel as if this coolness would do me good. If it only makes my life more pensive! Why should pensiveness be akin to sadness? There is a certain fertile sadness which I would not avoid, but rather earnestly seek. It is positively joyful to me. It saves my life from

[1] [*Walden*, p. 238; Riv. 336.]

being trivial. My life flows with a deeper current, no longer as a shallow and brawling stream, parched and shrunken by the summer heats. This coolness comes to condense the dews and clear the atmosphere. The stillness seems more deep and significant. Each sound seems to come from out a greater thoughtfulness in nature, as if nature had acquired some character and mind. The cricket, the gurgling stream, the rushing wind amid the trees, all speak to me soberly yet encouragingly of the steady onward progress of the universe. My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow, suddenly recover my spirits, my spirituality, through my hearing. I see a goldfinch go twittering through the still, louring day, and am reminded of the peeping flocks which will soon herald the thoughtful season. Ah! if I could so live that there should be no desultory moment in all my life! that in the trivial season, when small fruits are ripe, my fruits might be ripe also! that I could match nature always with my moods! that in each season when some part of nature especially flourishes, then a corresponding part of me may not fail to flourish! Ah, I would walk, I would sit and sleep, with natural piety! What if I could pray aloud or to myself as I went along by the brooksides a cheerful prayer like the birds! For joy I could embrace the earth; I shall delight to be buried in it. And then to think of those I love among men, who will know that I love them though I tell them not! I sometimes feel as if I were rewarded merely for expecting better hours. I did not despair of worthier moods, and

now I have occasion to be grateful for the flood of life that is flowing over me. I am not so poor: I can smell the ripening apples; the very rills are deep; the autumnal flowers, the *Trichostema dichotomum*, — not only its bright blue flower above the sand, but its strong wormwood scent which belongs to the season, — feed my spirit, endear the earth to me, make me value myself and rejoice; the quivering of pigeons' wings reminds me of the tough fibre of the air which they rend. I thank you, God. I do not deserve anything, I am unworthy of the least regard; and yet I am made to rejoice. I am impure and worthless, and yet the world is gilded for my delight and holidays are prepared for me, and my path is strewn with flowers. But I cannot thank the Giver; I cannot even whisper my thanks to those human friends I have. It seems to me that I am more rewarded for my expectations than for anything I do or can do. Ah, I would not tread on a cricket in whose song is such a revelation, so soothing and cheering to my ear! Oh, keep my senses pure! And why should I speak to my friends? for how rarely is it that I am I; and are they, then, they? We will meet, then, far away. The seeds of the summer are getting dry and falling from a thousand nodding heads. If I did not know you through thick and thin, how should I know you at all? Ah, the very brooks seem fuller of reflections than they were! Ah, such provoking sibylline sentences they are! The shallowest is all at once unfathomable. How can that depth be fathomed where a man may see himself reflected? The rill I stopped to drink at I drink in more than I expected. I satisfy and still provoke the thirst

of thirsts. Nut Meadow Brook where it crosses the road beyond Jenny Dugan's that was. I do not drink in vain. I mark that brook as if I had swallowed a water snake that would live in my stomach. I have swallowed something worth the while. The day is not what it was before I stooped to drink. Ah, I shall hear from that draught! It is not in vain that I have drunk. I have drunk an arrowhead. It flows from where all fountains rise.

How many ova have I swallowed? Who knows what will be hatched within me? There were some seeds of thought, methinks, floating in that water, which are expanding in me. The man must not drink of the running streams, the living waters, who is not prepared to have all nature reborn in him, — to suckle monsters. The snake in my stomach lifts his head to my mouth at the sound of running water. When was it that I swallowed a snake? I have got rid of the snake in my stomach. I drank of stagnant waters once. That accounts for it. I caught him by the throat and drew him out, and had a well day after all. Is there not such a thing as getting rid of the snake which you have swallowed when young, when thoughtless you stooped and drank at stagnant waters, which has worried you in your waking hours and in your sleep ever since, and appropriated the life that was yours? Will he not ascend into your mouth at the sound of running water? Then catch him boldly by the head and draw him out, though you may think his tail be curled about your vitals.

The farmers are just finishing their meadow-haying. (To-day is Sunday.) Those who have early potatoes

may be digging them, or doing any other job which the haying has obliged them to postpone. For six weeks or more this has been the farmer's work, to shave the surface of the fields and meadows clean. This is done all over the country. The razor is passed over these parts of nature's face the country over. A thirteenth labor which methinks would have broken the back of Hercules, would have given him a memorable sweat, accomplished with what sweating of scythes and early and late! I chance [to] know one young man who has lost his life in this season's campaign, by overdoing. In haying time some men take double wages, and they are engaged long before in the spring. To shave all the fields and meadows of New England clean! If men did this but once, and not every year, we should never hear the last of that labor; it would be more famous in each farmer's case than Buonaparte's road over the Simplon. It has no other bulletin but the truthful "Farmer's Almanac." Ask them where scythe-snaths are made and sold, and rifles too, if it is not a real labor. In its very weapons and its passes it has the semblance of war. Mexico was won with less exertion and less true valor than are required to do one season's haying in New England. The former work was done by those who played truant and ran away from the latter. Those Mexicans were mown down more easily than the summer's crop of grass in many a farmer's fields. Is there not some work in New England men? This haying is no work for marines, nor for deserters; nor for United States troops, so called, nor for West Point cadets. It would wilt them, and they would desert. Have they not deserted? and run off to

West Point? Every field is a battle-field to the mower, — a pitched battle too, — and whole winrows of dead have covered it in the course of the season. Early and late the farmer has gone forth with his formidable scythe, weapon of time, Time's weapon, and fought the ground inch by inch. It is the summer's enterprise. And if we were a more poetic people, horns would be blown to celebrate its completion. There might be a Haymakers' Day. New England's peaceful battles. At Bunker Hill there were some who stood at the rail-fence and behind the winrows of new-mown hay.[1] They have not yet quitted the field. They stand there still; they alone have not retreated.

The *Polygala sanguinea*, caducous polygala, in damp ground, with red or purple heads. The dandelion still blossoms, and the lupine still, belated.

I have been to Tarbell's Swamp by the Second Division this afternoon, and to the Marlborough road.

It has promised rain all day; cloudy and still and rather cool; from time to time a few drops gently spitting, but no shower. The landscape wears a sober autumnal look. I hear a drop or two on my hat. I wear a thick coat. The birds seem to know that it will not rain just yet. The swallows skim low over the pastures, twittering as they fly near me with forked tail, dashing near me as if I scared up insects for them. I see where a squirrel has been eating hazelnuts on a stump.

Tarbell's Swamp is mainly composed of low and even but dense beds of *Andromeda calyculata*, or dwarf andromeda, which bears the early flower in the spring.

[1] Stark and his companions met the enemy in the hay-field.

Here and there, mingled with it, is the water (?) andromeda; also pitch pines, birches, hardhack, and the common alder (*Alnus serrulata*), and, in separate and lower beds, the cranberry; and probably the *Rhodora Canadensis* might be found.

The lead-colored berries of the *Viburnum dentatum* now. Cow-wheat and indigo-weed still in bloom by the dry wood-path-side, and Norway cinquefoil. I detected a wild apple on the Marlborough road by its fragrance, in the thick woods; small stems, four inches in diameter, falling over or leaning like rays on every side; a clean white fruit, the ripest yellowish, a pleasant acid. The fruit covered the ground. It is unusual to meet with an early apple thus wild in the thickest woods. It seemed admirable to me. One of the noblest of fruits. With green specks under the skin.

Prenanthes alba, white-flowering prenanthes, with its strange halbert and variously shaped leaves; neottia; and hypericum.

I hear the rain (11 P. M.) distilling upon the ground, wetting the grass and leaves. The melons needed it. Their leaves were curled and their fruit stinted.

I am less somnolent for the cool season. I wake to a perennial day.

The hayer's work is done, but I hear no boasting, no firing of guns nor ringing of bells. He celebrates it by going about the work he had postponed "till after haying"! If all this steadiness and valor were spent upon some still worthier enterprise!!

All men's employments, all trades and professions, in some of their aspects are attractive. Hence the boy I

knew, having sucked cider at a minister's cider-mill, resolved to be a minister and make cider, not thinking, boy as he was, how little fun there was in being a minister, willing to purchase that pleasure at any price. When I saw the carpenters the other day repairing Hubbard's Bridge, their bench on the new planking they had laid over the water in the sun and air, with no railing yet to obstruct the view, I was almost ready to resolve that I would be a carpenter and work on bridges, to secure a pleasant place to work. One of the men had a fish-line cast round a sleeper, which he looked at from time to time.

John Potter told me that those root fences on the Corner road were at least sixty or seventy years old.[1] I see a solitary goldfinch now and then.

Hieracium Marianum or *scabrum; H. Kalmii* or *Canadense;* Marlborough road. *Leontodon autumnale* passim.

Aug. 18. It plainly makes men sad to think. Hence *pensiveness* is akin to sadness.

Some dogs, I have noticed, have a propensity to worry cows. They go off by themselves to distant pastures, and ever and anon, like four-legged devils, they worry the cows, — literally full of the devil. They are so full of the devil they know not what to do. I come to interfere between the cows and their tormentors. Ah, I grieve to see the devils escape so easily by their swift

[1] Some were drawn out of the swamp behind Abiel Wheeler's. Old lady Potter tells me she cannot remember when they were not there.

limbs, imps of mischief! They are the dog state of those boys who pull down hand-bills in the streets. Their next migration perchance will be into such dogs as these, ignoble fate! The dog, whose office it should be to guard the herd, turned its tormentor. Some courageous cow endeavoring in vain to toss the nimble devil.

Those soldiers in the Champ de Mars [1] at Montreal convinced me that I had arrived in a foreign country under a different government, where many are under the control of one. Such perfect drill could never be in a republic. Yet it had the effect on us as when the keeper shows his animals' claws. It was the English leopard showing his claws. The royal something or other.[2] I have no doubt that soldiers well drilled, as a class, are peculiarly destitute of originality and independence. The men were dressed above their condition; had the bearing of gentlemen without a corresponding intellectual culture.[3]

The Irish was a familiar element, but the Scotch a novel one. The St. Andrew's Church was prominent, and sometimes I was reminded of Edinburgh, — indeed, much more than of London.

Warburton remarked, soon after landing at Quebec, that everything was cheap in that country but men. My thought, when observing how the wooden pavements were sawed by hand in the streets, instead of by machinery, because labor was cheap, how cheap men are here![4]

[1] [See *Excursions*, pp. 16, 17; Riv. 20.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 79; Riv. 98.]

[3] [*Excursions*, p. 27; Riv. 32, 33.]

[4] [*Excursions*, pp. 29, 30; Riv. 36.]

It is evident that a private man is not worth so much in Canada as in the United States, and if that is the bulk of a man's property, *i. e.* the being private and peculiar, he had better stay here. An Englishman, methinks, not to speak of other nations, habitually regards himself merely as a constituent part of the English nation; he holds a recognized place as such; he is a member of the royal regiment of Englishmen. And he is proud of his nation. But an American cares very little about such, and greater freedom and independence are possible to him. He is nearer to the primitive condition of man. Government lets him alone, and he lets government alone.[1]

I often thought of the Tories and refugees who settled in Canada at [the time of] the Revolution. These English were to a considerable extent their descendants.

Quebec began to be fortified in a more regular manner in 1690.

The most modern fortifications have an air of antiquity about them; they have the aspect of ruins in better or worse repair, — ruins kept in repair from the day they were built, though they were completed yesterday, — because they are not in a true sense the work of this age. I couple them with the dismantled Spanish forts to be found in so many parts of the world. They carry me back to the Middle Ages, and the siege of Jerusalem, and St. Jean d'Acre, and the days of the Bucaniers. Such works are not consistent with the development of the intellect. Huge stone structures of all kinds, both by their creation and their influence,

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 82, 83; Riv. 102.]

rather oppress the intellect than set it free. A little thought will dismantle them as fast as they are built. They are a bungling contrivance. It is an institution as rotten as the church. The sentinel with his musket beside a man with his umbrella is spectral. There is not sufficient reason for his existence. My friend there, with a bullet resting on half an ounce of powder, does he think that he needs that argument in conversing with me? Of what use this fortification, to look at it from the soldier's point of view? General Wolfe sailed by it with impunity, and took the town of Quebec without experiencing any hindrance from its fortifications. How often do we have to read that the enemy occupied a position which commanded the old, and so the fort was evacuated![1]

How impossible it is to give that soldier a good education, without first making him virtually a deserter.[2]

It is as if I were to come to a country village surrounded with palisadoes in the old Indian style, — interesting as a relic of antiquity and barbarism. A fortified town is a man cased in the heavy armor of antiquity, and a horse-load of broadswords and small-arms slung to him, endeavoring to go about his business.

The idea seemed to be that some time the inhabitants of Canada might wish to govern themselves, and this was to hinder. But the inhabitants of California succeed well without any such establishment.[3] There would be the same sense in a man's wearing a breast-plate all his days for fear somebody should fire a bullet

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 77–79; Riv. 95–98.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 27; Riv. 33.] [3] [*Excursions*, p. 78; Riv. 97.]

at his vitals. The English in Canada seem to be everywhere prepared and preparing for war. In the United States they are prepared for anything; they may even be the aggressors. This is a ruin kept in a remarkably good repair. There are some eight hundred or a thousand men there to exhibit it. One regiment goes bare-legged to increase the attraction. If you wish to study the muscles of the leg about the knee, repair to Quebec.[1]

Aug. 19. *Clematis Virginiana;* calamint; *Lycopus Europeus,* water horehound.

This is a world where there are flowers. Now, at 5 A. M., the fog, which in the west looks like a wreath of hard-rolled cotton-batting, is rapidly dispersing. The echo of the railroad whistle is heard the horizon round; the gravel train is starting out. The farmers are cradling oats in some places. For some days past I have noticed a *red* maple or two about the pond, though we have had no frost. The grass is very wet with dew this morning.

The way in which men cling to old institutions after the life has departed out of them, and out of themselves, reminds me of those monkeys which cling by their tails, — aye, whose tails contract about the limbs, even the dead limbs, of the forest, and they hang suspended beyond the hunter's reach long after they are dead. It is of no use to argue with such men. They have not an apprehensive intellect, but merely, as it were, a prehensile tail. Their intellect possesses merely the quality of a prehensile tail. The tail itself contracts around the dead

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 79; Riv. 98.]

limb even after they themselves are dead, and not till sensible corruption takes place do they fall. The black howling monkey, or caraya. According to Azara, it is extremely difficult to get at them, for "when mortally wounded they coil the tail round a branch, and hang by it with the head downwards for days after death, and until, in fact, decomposition begins to take effect." The commenting naturalist says, "A singular peculiarity of this organ is to contract at its extremity of its own accord as soon as it is extended to its full length." I relinquish argument, I wait for decomposition to take place, for the subject is dead; as I value the hide for the museum. They say, "Though you 've got my soul, you sha'n't have my carcass."

P. M. — To Marlborough Road *via* Clamshell Hill, Jenny Dugan's, Round Pond, Canoe Birch Road (Deacon Dakin's), and White Pond.

How many things concur to keep a man at home, to prevent his yielding to his inclination to wander! If I would extend my walk a hundred miles, I must carry a tent on my back for shelter at night or in the rain, or at least I must carry a thick coat to be prepared for a change in the weather. So that it requires some resolution, as well as energy and foresight, to undertake the simplest journey. Man does not travel as easily as the birds migrate. He is not everywhere at home, like flies. When I think how many things I can conveniently carry, I am wont to think it most convenient to stay at home. My home, then, to a certain extent is the place where I keep my thick coat and my tent and some books which

I cannot carry; where, next, I can depend upon meeting some friends; and where, finally, I, even I, have established myself in business. But this last in my case is the least important qualification of a home.

The poet must be continually watching the moods of his mind, as the astronomer watches the aspects of the heavens. What might we not expect from a long life faithfully spent in this wise? The humblest observer would see some stars shoot. A faithful description as by a disinterested person of the thoughts which visited a certain mind in threescore years and ten, as when one reports the number and character of the vehicles which pass a particular point. As travellers go round the world and report natural objects and phenomena, so faithfully let another stay at home and report the phenomena of his own life, — catalogue stars, those thoughts whose orbits are as rarely calculated as comets. It matters not whether they visit my mind or yours, — whether the meteor falls in my field or in yours, — only that it come from heaven. (I am not concerned to express that kind of truth which Nature has expressed. Who knows but I may suggest some things to her? Time was when she was indebted to such suggestions from another quarter, as her present advancement shows. I deal with the truths that recommend themselves to me, — please me, — not those merely which any system has voted to accept.) A meteorological journal of the mind. You shall observe what occurs in your latitude, I in mine.

Some institutions — most institutions, indeed — have had a divine origin. But of most that we see pre-

vailing in society nothing but the form, the shell, is left; the life is extinct, and there is nothing divine in them. Then the reformer arises inspired to reinstitute life, and whatever he does or causes to be done is a reëstablishment of that same or a similar divineness. But some, who never knew the significance of these instincts, are, by a sort of false instinct, found clinging to the shells. Those who have no knowledge of the divine appoint themselves defenders of the divine, as champions of the church, etc. I have been astonished to observe how long some audiences can endure to hear a man speak on a subject which he knows nothing about, as religion for instance, when one who has no ear for music might with the same propriety take up the time of a musical assembly with putting through his opinions on music. This young man who is the main pillar of some divine institution, — does he know what he has undertaken? If the saints were to come again on earth, would they be likely to stay at his house? would they meet with his approbation even? *Ne sutor ultra crepidam.* They who merely have a talent for affairs are forward to express their opinions. A Roman soldier sits there to decide upon the righteousness of Christ. The world does not long endure such blunders, though they are made every day. The weak-brained and pusillanimous farmers would fain abide by the institutions of their fathers. Their argument is they have not long to live, and for that little space let them not be disturbed in their slumbers; blessed are the peacemakers; let this cup pass from me, etc.

How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live! Methinks that the moment my legs

begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow, as if I had given vent to the stream at the lower end and consequently new fountains flowed into it at the upper. A thousand rills which have their rise in the sources of thought burst forth and fertilize my brain. You need to increase the draught below, as the owners of meadows on Concord River say of the Billerica Dam. Only while we are in action is the circulation perfect. The writing which consists with habitual sitting is mechanical, wooden, dull to read.

The grass in the high pastures is almost as dry as hay. The seasons do not cease a moment to revolve, and therefore Nature rests no longer at her culminating point than at any other. If you are not out at the right instant, the summer may go by and you not see it. How much of the year is spring and fall! how little can be called summer! The grass is no sooner grown than it begins to wither. How much Nature herself suffers from drought! It seems quite as much as she can do to produce these crops.

The most inattentive walker can see how the science of geology took its rise. The inland hills and promontories betray the action of water on their rounded sides as plainly as if the work were completed yesterday. He sees it with but half an eye as he walks, and forgets his thought again. Also the level plains and more recent meadows and marine shells found on the tops of hills. The geologist painfully and elaborately follows out these suggestions, and hence his fine-spun theories.

The goldfinch, though solitary, is now one of the commonest birds in the air.

What if a man were earnestly and wisely to set about recollecting and preserving the thoughts which he has had! How many perchance are now irrecoverable! Calling in his neighbors to aid him.

I do not like to hear the name of particular States given to birds and flowers which are found in all equally, — as Maryland yellow-throat, etc., etc. The *Canadenses* and *Virginicas* may be suffered to pass for the most part, for there is historical as well as natural reason at least for them. Canada is the peculiar country of some and the northern limit of many more plants. And Virginia, which was originally the name for all the Atlantic shore, has some right to stand for the South.

The fruit of the sweet-gale by Nut Meadow Brook is of a yellowish green now and has not yet its greasy feel.

The little red-streaked and dotted excrescences on the shrub oaks I find as yet no name for.

Now for the pretty red capsules or pods of the *Hypericum Canadense*.

White goldenrod is budded along the Marlborough road.

Chickadees and jays never fail. The cricket's is a note which does not attract you to itself. It is not easy to find one.

I fear that the character of my knowledge is from year to year becoming more distinct and scientific; that, in exchange for views as wide as heaven's cope, I am being narrowed down to the field of the microscope. I see details, not wholes nor the shadow of the whole. I count some parts, and say, "I know." The cricket's chirp now fills the air in dry fields near pine woods.

Gathered our first watermelon to-day. By the Marlborough road I notice the richly veined leaves of the *Neottia pubescens*, or veined neottia, rattlesnake-plantain. I like this last name very well, though it might not be easy to convince a quibbler or proser of its fitness. We want some name to express the mystic wildness of its rich leaves. Such work as men imitate in their embroidery, unaccountably agreeable to the eye, as if it answered its end only when it met the eye of man; a reticulated leaf, visible only on one side; little things which make one pause in the woods, take captive the eye.

Here is a bees' or wasps' nest in the sandy, mouldering bank by the roadside, four inches in diameter, as if made of scales of striped brown paper. It is singular if indeed man first made paper and then discovered its resemblance to the work of the wasps, and did not derive the hint from them.

Canoe birches by road to Dakin's. Cuticle stripped off; inner bark dead and scaling off; new (inner) bark formed.

The Solomon's-seals are fruited now, with finely red-dotted berries.

There was one original name well given, *Buster* Kendal.[1] The fragrance of the clethra fills the air by watersides. In the hollows where in winter is a pond, the grass is short, thick, and green still, and here and there are tufts pulled up as if by the mouth of cows.

Small rough sunflower by side of road between canoe birch and White Pond, — *Helianthus divaricatus*.

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 290; also *Journal*, vol. iii, p. 117.]

Lespedeza capitata, shrubby lespedeza, White Pond road and Marlborough road.

L. polystachya, hairy lespedeza, Corner road beyond Hubbard's Bridge.

Aug. 20. 2 P. M. — To Lee's Bridge *via* Hubbard's Wood, Potter's field, Conantum, returning by Abel Minott's house, Clematis Brook, Baker's pine plain, and railroad.

I hear a cricket in the Depot Field, walk a rod or two, and find the note proceeds from near a rock. Partly under a rock, between it and the roots of the grass, he lies concealed, — for I pull away the withered grass with my hands, — uttering his night-like creak, with a vibratory motion of his wings, and flattering himself that it is night, because he has shut out the day. He was a black fellow nearly an inch long, with two long, slender feelers. They plainly avoid the light and hide their heads in the grass. At any rate they regard this as the evening of the year. They are remarkably secret and unobserved, considering how much noise they make. Every milkman has heard them all his life; it is the sound that fills his ears as he drives along. But what one has ever got off his cart to go in search of one? I see smaller ones moving stealthily about, whose note I do not know. Who ever distinguished their various notes, which fill the crevices in each other's song? It would be a curious ear, indeed, that distinguished the species of the crickets which it heard, and traced even the earth-song home, each part to its particular performer. I am afraid to be so knowing. They are shy as birds, these little bodies. Those nearest

me continually cease their song as I walk, so that the singers are always a rod distant, and I cannot easily detect one. It is difficult, moreover, to judge correctly whence the sound proceeds. Perhaps this wariness is necessary to save them from insectivorous birds, which would otherwise speedily find out so loud a singer. They are somewhat protected by the universalness of the sound, each one's song being merged and lost in the general concert, as if it were the creaking of earth's axle. They are very numerous in oats and other grain, which conceals them and yet affords a clear passage. I never knew any drought or sickness so to prevail as to quench the song of the crickets; it fails not in its season, night or day.

The *Lobelia inflata*, Indian-tobacco, meets me at every turn. At first I suspect some new bluish flower in the grass, but stooping see the inflated pods. Tasting one such herb convinces me that there are such things as drugs which may either kill or cure.[1]

The *Rhexia Virginica* is a showy flower at present.

How copious and precise the botanical language to describe the leaves, as well as the other parts of a plant! Botany is worth studying if only for the precision of its terms, — to learn the value of words and of system. It is wonderful how much pains has been taken to describe a flower's leaf, compared for instance with the care that is taken in describing a psychological fact. Suppose as much ingenuity (perhaps it would be needless) in making a language to express the sentiments! We are armed

[1] A farmer tells me that he knows when his horse has eaten it, because it makes him slobber badly.

with language adequate to describe each leaf in the field, or at least to distinguish it from each other, but not to describe a human character. With equally wonderful indistinctness and confusion we describe men. The precision and copiousness of botanical language applied to the description of moral qualities!

The neottia, or ladies'-tresses, behind Garfield's house. The golden robin is now a rare bird to see. Here are the small, lively-tasting blackberries, so small they are not commonly eaten. The grasshoppers seem no drier than the grass. In Lee's field are two kinds of plantain. Is the common one found there?

The willow reach by Lee's Bridge has been stripped for powder. None escapes. This morning, hearing a cart, I looked out and saw George Dugan going by with a horse-load of his willow toward Acton powder-mills, which I had seen in piles by the turnpike. Every traveller has just as particular an errand which I might likewise chance to be privy to.

Now that I am at the extremity of my walk, I see a threatening cloud blowing up from the south, which however, methinks, will not compel me to make haste.

Apios tuberosa, or *Glycine Apios*, ground-nut. The prenanthes now takes the place of the lactucas, which are gone to seed.

In the dry ditch, near Abel Minott's house that was, I see cardinal-flowers, with their red artillery, reminding me of soldiers, — red men, war, and bloodshed. Some are four and a half feet high. Thy sins shall be as scarlet. Is it my sins that I see? It shows how far a little color can go; for the flower is not large, yet it makes

itself seen from afar, and so answers the purpose for which it was colored completely. It is remarkable for its intensely brilliant scarlet color. You are slow to concede to it a high rank among flowers, but ever and anon, as you turn your eyes away, it dazzles you and you pluck it. *Scutellaria lateriflora*, side-flowering skullcap, here. This brook deserves to be called Clematis Brook (though that name is too often applied), for the clematis is very abundant, running over the alders and other bushes on its brink. Where the brook issues from the pond, the nightshade grows profusely, spreading five or six feet each way, with its red berries now ripe. It grows, too, at the upper end of the pond. But if it is the button-bush that grows in the now low water, it should rather be called the Button-Bush Pond. Now the tall rush is in its prime on the shore here, and the clematis abounds by this pond also.

I came out by the leafy-columned elm under Mt. Misery, where the trees stood up one above another, higher and higher, immeasurably far to my imagination, as on the side of a New Hampshire mountain.

On the pitch pine plain, at first the pines are far apart, with a wiry grass between, and goldenrod and hardhack and St. John's-wort and blackberry vines, each tree merely keeping down the grass for a space about itself, meditating to make a forest floor; and here and there younger pines are springing up. Further in, you come to moss-covered patches, dry, deep white moss, or almost bare mould, half covered with pine needles. Thus begins the future forest floor.

The sites of the shanties that once stood by the rail-

road in Lincoln when the Irish built it, the still remaining hollow square mounds of earth which formed their embankments, are to me instead of barrows and druidical monuments and other ruins. It is a sufficient antiquity to me since they were built, their material being earth. Now the Canada thistle and the mullein crown their tops. I see the stones which made their simple chimneys still left one upon another at one end, which were surmounted with barrels to eke them out; and clean boiled beef bones and old shoes are strewn about. Otherwise it is a clean ruin, and nothing is left but a mound, as in the graveyard.

Sium lineare, a kind of water-parsnip, whose blossom resembles the *Cicuta maculata*. The flowers of the blue vervain have now nearly reached the summit of their spikes.

A traveller who looks at things with an impartial eye may see what the oldest inhabitant has not observed.

Aug. 21. To a great extent the feudal system still prevails there (in Canada), and I saw that I should be a bad citizen, that any man who thought for himself and was only reasonably independent would naturally be a rebel. You could not read or hear of their laws without seeing that it was a legislating for a few and not for all. That certainly is the best government where the inhabitants are least often reminded of the government. (Where a man cannot be a poet even without danger of being made poet-laureate! Where he cannot be healthily neglected, and grow up a man, and not an Englishman merely!) Where it is the most natural thing

in the world for a government that does not understand you, to let you alone. Oh, what a government were there, my countrymen! It is a government, that English one, — and most other European ones, — that cannot afford to be forgotten, as you would naturally forget them, that cannot let you go alone, having learned to walk. It appears to me that a true Englishman can only speculate within bounds; he has to pay his respects to so many things that before he knows it he has paid all he is worth. The principal respect in which our government is more tolerable is in the fact that there is so much less of government with us. In the States it is only once in a dog's age that a man need remember his government, but here he is reminded of it every day. Government parades itself before you. It is in no sense the servant but the master.[1]

What a faculty must that be which can paint the most barren landscape and humblest life in glorious colors! It is pure and invigorated senses reacting on a sound and strong imagination. Is not that the poet's case? The intellect of most men is barren. They neither fertilize nor are fertilized. It is the marriage of the soul with Nature that makes the intellect fruitful, that gives birth to imagination. When we were dead and dry as the highway, some sense which has been healthily fed will put us in relation with Nature, in sympathy with her; some grains of fertilizing pollen, floating in the air, fall on us, and suddenly the sky is all one rainbow, is full of music and fragrance and flavor. The man of intellect only, the prosaic man, is a barren,

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 83; Riv. 102, 103.]

staminiferous flower; the poet is a fertile and perfect flower. Men are such confirmed arithmeticians and slaves of business that I cannot easily find a blank-book that has not a red line or a blue one for the dollars and cents, or some such purpose.[1]

As is a man's intellectual character, is not such his physical after all? Can you not infer from knowing the intellectual characters of two which is most tenacious of life, which would die the hardest and will live the longest, which is the toughest, which has most brute strength, which the most passive endurance? Methinks I could to some extent infer these things.

1 P. M. — Round Flint's Pond *via* railroad, my old field, Goose Pond, Wharf Rock, Cedar Hill, Smith's, and so back.

Bigelow, speaking of the spikes of the blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), says, "The flowering commences at their base and is long in reaching their summit." I perceive that only one circle of buds, about half a dozen, blossoms at a time, — and there are about thirty circles in the space of three inches, — while the next circle of buds above at the same time shows the blue. Thus this triumphant blossoming circle travels upward, driving the remaining buds off into space.[2] I think it was the 16th of July when I first noticed them (on another plant), and now they are all within about half an inch of the top of the spikes. Yet the blossoms have got no nearer the top on long [*sic*] spikes, which had many buds, than on short ones only an inch long. Per-

[1] [Channing, pp. 85, 86.] [2] [Channing, p. 214.]

haps the blossoming commenced enough earlier on the long ones to make up for the difference in length. It is very pleasant to measure the progress of the season by this and similar clocks. So you get, not the absolute time, but the true time of the season.[1] But I can measure the progress of the seasons only by observing a particular plant, for I notice that they are by no means equally advanced.

The prevailing conspicuous flowers at present are: The early goldenrods, tansy, the life-everlastings, fleabane (though not for its flower), yarrow (rather dry), hardhack and meadow-sweet (both getting dry, also mayweed), *Eupatorium purpureum*, scabish, clethra (really a fine, sweet-scented, and this year particularly fair and fresh, flower, some unexpanded buds at top tinged with red), *Rhexia Virginica*, thoroughwort, *Polygala sanguinea*, prunella, and dog's-bane (getting stale), etc., etc. Touch-me-not (less observed), Canada snapdragon by roadside (not conspicuous). The purple gerardia now, horsemint, or *Mentha borealis*, *Veronica scutellata* (marsh speedwell), *Ranunculus acris* (tall crowfoot) still. Mowing to some extent improves the landscape to the eye of the walker. The aftermath, so fresh and green, begins now to recall the spring to my mind. In some fields fresh clover heads appear. This is certainly better than fields of lodged and withered grass. I find ground-nuts by the railroad causeway three quarters of an inch long by a third of an inch. The epilobium still. Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum Americanum*) still flourishes as much if not more than ever, and, shrubby-

[1] [Channing, p. 214.]

looking, helps cover the ground where the wood has recently been cut off, like huckleberry bushes.

There is some advantage, intellectually and spiritually, in taking wide views with the bodily eye and not pursuing an occupation which holds the body prone. There is some advantage, perhaps, in attending to the general features of the landscape over studying the particular plants and animals which inhabit it. A man may walk abroad and no more see the sky than if he walked under a shed. The poet is more in the air than the naturalist, though they may walk side by side. Granted that you are out-of-doors; but what if the outer door *is* open, if the inner door is shut! You must walk sometimes perfectly free, not prying nor inquisitive, not bent upon seeing things. Throw away a whole day for a single expansion, a single inspiration of air.

Any anomaly in vegetation makes Nature seem more real and present in her working, as the various red and yellow excrescences on young oaks. I am affected as if it were a different Nature that produced them. As if a poet were born who had designs in his head.[1]

It is remarkable that animals are often obviously, manifestly, related to the plants which they feed upon or live among, — as caterpillars, butterflies, tree-toads, partridges, chewinks, — and this afternoon I noticed a yellow spider on a goldenrod; as if every condition might have its expression in some form of animated being.[2]

Spear-leaved goldenrod in path to northeast of Flint's Pond. *Hieracium paniculatum*, a very delicate and

[1] [Channing, p. 74.] [2] [Channing, p. 215.]

slender hawkweed. I have now found all the hawkweeds. Singular these genera of plants, plants manifestly related yet distinct. They suggest a history to nature, a natural *history* in a new sense.[1]

At Wharf Rock found water lobelia in blossom. I saw some smilax vines in the swamp, which were connected with trees ten feet above the ground whereon they grew and four or five feet above the surrounding bushes. This slender vine, which cannot stand erect, how did it establish that connection? Have the trees and shrubs by which it once climbed been cut down? Or perchance do the young and flexible shoots blow up in high winds and fix themselves?[2] On Cedar Hill, south side pond, I still hear the locust, though it has been so much colder for the last week. It is quite hazy in the west, though comparatively clear in other directions. The barberry bushes, with their drooping wreaths of fruit now turning red, bushed up with some other shrub or tree.

Aug. 22. I found last winter that it was expected by my townsmen that I would give some account of Canada because I had *visited* it, and because many of them had, and so felt interested in the subject, — visited it as the bullet visits the wall at which it is fired, and from which it rebounds as quickly, and flattened (somewhat damaged, perchance)! Yes, a certain man contracted to take fifteen hundred live Yankees through Canada, at a certain rate and within a certain time. It did not matter to him what the commodity was, if only it would pack

[1] [Channing, p. 74.] [2] [Channing, p. 214.]

well and were delivered to him according to agreement at the right place and time and rightly ticketed, so much in bulk, wet or dry, on deck or in the hold, at the option of the carrier how to stow the cargo and not always right side up. In the meanwhile, it was understood that the freight was not to be willfully and intentionally debarred from seeing the country if it had eyes. It was understood that there would be a country to be seen on either side, though that was a secret advantage which the contractors seemed not to be aware of. I fear that I have not got much to say, not having seen much, for the very rapidity of the motion had a tendency to keep my eyelids closed. What I *got* by going to Canada was a cold, and not till I get a fever, which I never had, shall I know how to appreciate it.[1]

It is the fault of some excellent writers — De Quincey's first impressions on seeing London suggest it to me — that they express themselves with too great fullness and detail. They give the most faithful, natural, and lifelike account of their sensations, mental and physical, but they lack moderation and sententiousness. They do not affect us by an ineffectual earnestness and a reserve of meaning, like a stutterer; they say all they mean. Their sentences are not concentrated and nutty. Sentences which suggest far more than they say, which have an atmosphere about them, which do not merely report an old, but make a new, impression; sentences which suggest as many things and are as durable as a Roman aqueduct; to frame these, that is the *art* of writing. Sentences which are expensive, towards which

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 3; Riv. 3.]

so many volumes, so much life, went; which lie like boulders on the page, up and down or across; which contain the seed of other sentences, not mere repetition, but creation; which a man might sell his grounds and castles to build. If De Quincey had suggested each of his pages in a sentence and passed on, it would have been far more excellent writing. His style is nowhere kinked and knotted up into something hard and significant, which you could swallow like a diamond, without digesting.[1]

Aug. 23. *Saturday.* To Walden to bathe at 5.30 A. M. Traces of the heavy rains in the night. The sand and gravel are beaten hard by them. Three or four showers in succession. But the grass is not so wet as after an ordinary dew. The *Verbena hastata* at the pond has reached the top of its spike, a little in advance of what I noticed yesterday; only one or two flowers are adhering. At the commencement of my walk I saw no traces of fog, but after detected fogs over particular meadows and high up some brooks' valleys, and far in the Deep Cut the wood fog. First muskmelon this morning.

I rarely pass the shanty in the woods, where human beings are lodged, literally, no better than pigs in a sty, — little children, a grown man and his wife, and an aged grandmother living this squalid life, squatting on the ground, — but I wonder if it can be indeed true that little Julia Riordan calls this place home, comes here to rest at night and for her daily food, — in whom

[1] [Channing, pp. 229, 230.]

ladies and gentlemen in the village take an interest. Of what significance are charity and almshouses? That there they live unmolested! in one sense so many degrees below the almshouse! beneath charity! It is admirable, — Nature against almshouses. A certain wealth of nature, not poverty, it suggests. Not to identify health and contentment, aye, and independence, with the possession of this world's goods! It is not wise to waste compassion on them.

As I go through the Deep Cut, I hear one or two early humblebees, come out on the damp sandy bank, whose low hum sounds like distant horns from far in the horizon over the woods. It was long before I detected the bees that made it, so far away and musical it sounded, like the shepherds in some distant eastern vale greeting the king of day.[1]

The farmers now carry — those who have got them — their early potatoes and onions to market, starting away early in the morning or at midnight. I see them returning in the afternoon with the empty barrels.

Perchance the copious rain of last night will trouble those who had not been so provident as to get their hay from the Great Meadows, where it is often lost.

P. M. — Walk to Annursnack and back over stone bridge.

I sometimes reproach myself because I do not find anything attractive in certain mere trivial employments of men, — that I skip men so commonly, and their affairs, — the professions and the trades, — do not

[1] [Channing, p. 77.]

elevate them at least in my thought and get some material for poetry out of them directly. I will not avoid, then, to go by where these men are repairing the stone bridge, — see if I cannot see poetry in that, if that will not yield me a reflection. It is narrow to be confined to woods and fields and grand aspects of nature only. The greatest and wisest will still be related to men. Why not see men standing in the sun and casting a shadow, even as trees? May not some light be reflected from them as from the stems of trees? I will try to enjoy them as animals, at least. They are perhaps better animals than men. Do not neglect to speak of men's low life and affairs with sympathy, though you ever so speak as to suggest a contrast between them and the ideal and divine. You may be excused if you are always pathetic, but do not refuse to recognize.

Resolve to read no book, to take no walk, to undertake no enterprise, but such as you can endure to give an account of to yourself. Live thus deliberately for the most part.

When I stopped to gather some blueberries by the roadside this afternoon, I heard the shrilling of a cricket or a grasshopper close to me, quite clear, almost like a bell, a stridulous sound, a clear ring, incessant, not intermittent, like the song of the black fellow I caught the other day, and not suggesting the night, but belonging to day. It was long before I could find him, though all the while within a foot or two. I did not know whether to search amid the grass and stones or amid the leaves. At last, by accident I saw him, he shrilling all the while under an alder leaf two feet from the ground, — a

slender green fellow with long feelers and transparent wings. When he shrilled, his wings, which opened on each other in the form of a heart perpendicularly to his body like the wings of fairies, vibrated swiftly on each other. The apparently wingless female, as I thought, was near.

We experience pleasure when an elevated field or even road in which we may be walking holds its level toward the horizon at a tangent to the earth, is not convex with the earth's surface, but an absolute level.

On or under east side of Annursnack, *Epilobium coloratum*, colored willow-herb, near the spring. Also *Polygonum sagittatum*, scratch-grass.

The Price Farm road, one of those everlasting roads which the sun delights to shine along in an August afternoon, playing truant; which seem to stretch themselves with terrene jest as the weary traveller journeys on; where there are three white sandy furrows (*lirœ*), two for the wheels and one between them for the horse, with endless green grass borders between and room on each side for huckleberries and birches; where the walls indulge in freaks, not always parallel to the ruts, and goldenrod yellows all the path; which some elms began to border and shade once, but left off in despair, it was so long; from no point on which can you be said to be at any definite distance from a town.

I associate the beauty of Quebec with the steel-like and flashing air.[1]

Our little river reaches are not to be forgotten. I noticed that seen northward on the Assabet from the

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 88; Riv. 109.]

Causeway Bridge near the second stone bridge. There was [a] man in a boat in the sun, just disappearing in the distance round a bend, lifting high his arms and dipping his paddle as if he were a vision bound to land of the blessed, — far off, as in picture. When I see Concord to purpose, I see it as if it were not real but painted, and what wonder if I do not speak to *thee?* I saw a snake by the roadside and touched him with my foot to see if he were alive. He had a toad in his jaws, which he was preparing to swallow with his jaws distended to three times his width, but he relinquished his prey in haste and fled; and I thought, as the toad jumped leisurely away with his slime-covered hind-quarters glistening in the sun, as if I, his deliverer, wished to interrupt his meditations, — without a shriek or fainting, — I thought what a healthy indifference he manifested. Is not this the broad earth still? he said.[1]

Aug. 24. *Mollugo verticillata*, carpet-weed, flat, whorl-leaved weed in gardens, with small white flowers. *Portulaca oleracea*, purslane, with its yellow blossoms. *Chelone glabra.* I have seen the small mulleins as big as a ninepence in the fields for a day or two.[2]

The weather is warmer again after a week or more of cool days. There is greater average warmth, but not such intolerable heats as in July. The nights especially are more equably warm now, even when the day has been comparatively rather cool. There are few days now, fewer than in July, when you cannot lie at your length on the grass. You have now forgotten winter

[1] [Channing, pp. 287, 288.]

[2] [The word "mulleins" is queried in pencil.]

and its fashions, and have learned new summer fashions. Your life may be out-of-doors now mainly.

Rattlesnake grass is ripe. The pods of the *Asclepias pulchra* stand up pointedly like slender vases on a salver, — an open salver truly! Those of the *Asclepias Syriaca* hang down. The interregnum in the blossoming of flowers being *well* over, many small flowers blossom now in the low grounds, having just reached their summer. It is now dry enough, and they feel the heat their tenderness required. The autumnal flowers, — goldenrods, asters, and johnswort, — though they have made demonstrations, have not yet commenced to reign. The tansy is already getting stale; it is perhaps the first conspicuous yellow flower that passes from the stage.[1]

In Hubbard's Swamp, where the blueberries, dangleberries, and especially the pyrus or choke-berries were so abundant last summer, there is now perhaps not one (unless a blueberry) to be found. Where the chokeberries held on all last winter, the black and the red.

The common skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), quite a handsome and middling-large blue flower. *Lobelia pallida* still. Pointed cleavers or clivers (*Galium asprellum*). Is that the naked viburnum, so common, with its white, red, then purple berries, in Hubbard's meadow?[2]

Did I find the dwarf tree-primrose in Hubbard's meadow to-day? *Stachys aspera*, hedge-nettle or woundwort, a rather handsome purplish flower. The capsules of the *Iris versicolor*, or blue flag, are now ready for humming [?]. Elderberries are ripe.

[1] [Channing, p. 215.]

[2] Yes.

Aug. 25. *Monday.* What the little regular, rounded, light-blue flower in Heywood Brook which I make Class V, Order 1? Also the small purplish flower growing on the mud in Hubbard's meadow, perchance C. XIV, with one pistil? What the bean vine in the garden, Class VIII, Order 1? I do not find the name of the large white polygonum of the river. Was it the filiform ranunculus which I found on Hubbard's shore? *Hypericum Virginicum*, mixed yellow and purple. The black rough fruit of the skunk-cabbage, though green within, barely rising above the level of the ground; you see where it has been cut in two by the mowers in the meadows. *Polygonum amphibium*, red, in river. *Lysimachia hybrida* still. Checkerberry in bloom. Blue-eyed grass still. *Rhus copallina*, mountain or dwarf sumach. I now know all of the *Rhus* genus in Bigelow. We have all but the staghorn in Concord. What a miserable name has the *Gratiola aurea*, hedge hyssop! Whose hedge does it grow by, pray, in this part of the world? [1]

Aug. 26. A cool and even piercing wind blows to-day, making all shrubs to bow and trees to wave; such as we could not have had in July. I speak not of its coolness but its strength and steadiness. The wind and the coldness increased as the day advanced, and finally the wind went down with the sun. I was compelled to put on an extra coat for my walk. The ground is strewn with windfalls, and much fruit will consequently be lost.

The wind roars amid the pines like the surf. You can hardly hear the crickets for the din, or the cars. I think

[1] [Channing, p. 215.]

the last must be considerably delayed when their course is against it. Indeed it is difficult to enjoy a quiet thought. You sympathize too much with the commotion and restlessness of the elements. Such a blowing, stirring, bustling day, — what does it mean? All light things decamp; straws and loose leaves change their places. Such a blowing day is no doubt indispensable in the economy of nature. The whole country is a seashore, and the wind is the surf that breaks on it. It shows the white and silvery under sides of the leaves. Do plants and trees need to be thus tried and twisted? Is it a first intimation to the sap to cease to ascend, to thicken their stems? The *Gerardia pedicularia*, bushy gerardia, I find on the White Pond road.

I perceive that some farmers are cutting turf now. They require the driest season of the year. There is something agreeable to my thoughts in thus burning a part of the earth, the stock of fuel is so inexhaustible. Nature looks not mean and niggardly, but like an ample loaf. Is not he a rich man who owns a peat meadow? It is to enjoy the luxury of wealth. It must be a luxury to sit around the fire in winter days and nights and burn these dry slices of the meadow which contain roots of all herbs. You dry and burn the very earth itself. It is a fact kindred with salt-licks. The meadow is strewn with the fresh bars, bearing the marks of the fork, and the turf-cutter is wheeling them out with his barrow. To sit and see the world aglow and try to imagine how it would seem to have it so destroyed!

Woodchucks are seen tumbling into their holes on all sides.

Aug. 27. I see the volumes of smoke — not quite the blaze — from burning brush, as I suppose, far in the western horizon. I believe it is at this season of the year chiefly that you see this sight. It is always a question with some whether it is not a fire in the woods, or some building. It is an interesting feature in the scenery at this season. The farmer's simple enterprises.

The vervain which I examined by the railroad the other day has still a quarter of an inch to the top of its spikes. Hawkweed groundsel (*Senecio hieracifolius*) (fireweed). *Rubus sempervirens*, evergreen raspberry, the small low blackberry, is now in fruit. The *Medeola Virginica*, cucumber-root, the whorl-leaved plant, is now in green fruit. *Polygala cruciata*, cross-leaved polygala, in the meadow between Trillium Woods and railroad. This is rare and new to me. It has a very sweet, but as it were intermittent, fragrance, as of checkerberry and mayflowers combined. The handsome calyx-leaves.[1]

Aug. 28. The pretty little blue flower in the Heywood Brook, Class V, Order 1. Corolla about one sixth of an inch in diameter, with five rounded segments; stamens and pistil shorter than corolla; calyx with five acute segments and acute sinuses; leaves not opposite, lanceolate, spatulate, blunt, somewhat hairy on upper side with a midrib only, sessile; flowers in a loose raceme on rather long pedicels. Whole plant decumbent, curving upward. Wet ground. Said to be like the forget-me-not.

[1] [Channing, p. 216.]

Raphanus Raphanistrum, or wild radish, in meadows.

I find three or four ordinary laborers to-day putting up the necessary outdoor fixtures for a magnetic telegraph from Boston to Burlington. They carry along a basket full of simple implements, like travelling tinkers, and, with a little rude soldering, and twisting, and straightening of wires, the work is done. It is a work which seems to admit of the greatest latitude of ignorance and bungling, and as if you might set your hired man with the poorest head and hands to building a magnetic telegraph. All great inventions stoop thus low to succeed, for the understanding is but little above the feet. They preserve so low a tone; they are simple almost to coarseness and commonplaceness. Somebody had told them what he wanted, and sent them forth with a coil of wire to make a magnetic telegraph. It seems not so wonderful an invention as a common cart or a plow.

Evening. — A new moon visible in the east [*sic*]. How unexpectedly it always appears! You easily lose it in the sky. The whip-poor-will sings, but not so commonly as in spring. The bats are active.

The poet is a man who lives at last by watching his moods. An old poet comes at last to watch his moods as narrowly as a cat does a mouse.

I omit the unusual — the hurricanes and earthquakes — and describe the common. This has the greatest charm and is the true theme of poetry. You may have the extraordinary for your province, if you will let me have the ordinary. Give me the obscure life, the cot-

tage of the poor and humble, the workdays of the world, the barren fields, the smallest share of all things but poetic perception. Give me but the eyes to see the things which you possess.[1]

Aug. 29. Though it is early, my neighbor's hens have strayed far into the fog toward the river. I find a wasp in my window, which already appears to be taking refuge from winter and unspeakable fate.

Those who first built it, coming from old France, with the memory and tradition of feudal days and customs weighing on them, were unquestionably behind their age, and those who now inhabit it and repair it are behind their ancestors. It is as if the inhabitants of Boston should go down to Fort Independence, or the inhabitants of New York should go over to Castle William, to live. I rubbed my eyes to be sure that I was in the Nineteenth Century. That would be a good place to read Froissart's Chronicles, I thought. It is a specimen of the Old World in the New. It is such a reminiscence of the Middle Ages as one of Scott's novels. Those old chevaliers thought they could transplant the feudal system to America. It has been set out, but it has not thriven.[2]

Might I not walk a little further, till I hear new crickets, till their creak has acquired some novelty, as if they were a new species whose habitat I had reached?[3]

The air is filled with mist, yet a transparent mist, a principle in it you might call *flavor*, which ripens fruits.

[1] [Channing, p. 87.] [2] [*Excursions*, p. 81; Riv. 100, 101.]
[3] [Channing, p. 70.]

This haziness seems to confine and concentrate the sunlight, as if you lived in a halo. It is August.

A flock of forty-four young turkeys with their old [*sic*], half a mile from a house on Conantum by the river, the old faintly gobbling, the half-grown young peeping. Turkey-men!

Gerardia glauca (*quercifolia*, says one), tall gerardia, one flower only left; also *Corydalis glauca*.

Aug. 30. *Saturday.* I perceive in the Norway cinquefoil (*Potentilla Norvegica*), now nearly out of blossom, that the alternate five leaves of the calyx are closing over the seeds to protect them. This evidence of forethought, this simple *reflection* in a double sense of the term, in this flower, is affecting to me, as if it said to me: "Even I am doing my appointed work in this world faithfully. Not even do I, however obscurely I may grow among the other loftier and more famous plants, shirk my work, humble weed as I am. Not even when I have blossomed, and have lost my painted petals and am preparing to die down to my root, do I forget to fall with my arms around my babe, faithful to the last, that the infant may be found preserved in the arms of the frozen mother." That thus all the Norway cinquefoils in the world had curled back their calyx leaves, their warm cloaks, when now their flowering season was past, over their progeny, from the time they were created! There is one door closed, of the closing year. Nature ordered this bending back of the calyx leaves, and every year since this plant was created her order has been faithfully obeyed, and this plant acts

not an obscure, but essential, part in the revolution of the seasons. I am not ashamed to be contemporary with the Norway cinquefoil. May I perform my part as well![1] There is so much done toward closing up the year's accounts. It is as good as if I saw the great globe go round. It is as if I saw the Janus doors of the year closing. The fall of each humblest flower marks the annual period of some phase of human life, experience. I can be said to note the flower's fall only when I see in it the symbol of my own change. When I experience this, then the flower appears to me.

Drosera rotundifolia in Moore's new field ditch. The *Viola pedata* and the houstonia now. What is the peculiarity of these flowers that *they* blossom again? Is it merely because they blossomed so early in the spring, and now are ready for a new spring? They impress me as so much more native or naturalized here.

We love to see Nature fruitful in whatever kind. It assures us of her vigor and that she may equally bring forth the fruits which we prize. I love to see the acorns plenty, even on the shrub oaks, aye, and the nightshade berries. I love to see the potato balls numerous and large, as I go through a low field, poisonous though they look, the plant thus, as it were, bearing fruit at both ends, saying ever and anon, "Not only these tubers I offer you for the present, but if you will have new varieties, — if these do not satisfy you, — plant these seeds."[2] What abundance! what luxuriance! what bounty! The potato balls, which are worth-

[1] [Channing, p. 74.] [2] [Channing, pp. 74, 215.]

less to the farmer, combine to make the general impression of the year's fruitfulness. It is as cheering to me as the rapid increase of the population of New York.

Aug. 31. *Proserpinaca palustris*, spear-leaved proserpinaca, mermaid-weed. (This in Hubbard's Grove on my way to Conantum.) A hornets' (?) nest in a rather tall huckleberry bush, the stems projecting through it, the leaves spreading over it. How these fellows avail themselves of the vegetables! They kept arriving, the great fellows, but I never saw whence they came, but only heard the buzz just at the entrance. (With whitish abdomens.) At length, after I have stood before the nest five minutes, during which time they had taken no notice of me, two seemed to be consulting at the entrance, and then one made a threatening dash at me and returned to the nest. I took the hint and retired. They spoke as plainly as man could have done.[1]

I see that the farmers have begun to top their corn.

Examined my old friend the green locust (?), shrilling on an alder leaf.

What relation does the fall dandelion bear to the spring dandelion? There is a rank scent of tansy now on some roads, disagreeable to many people from being associated in their minds with funerals, where it is sometimes put into the coffin and about the corpse. I have not observed much St. John's-wort yet. *Galium triflorum*, three-flowered cleavers, in Conant's Spring Swamp; also fever-bush there, now budded for next

[1] [Channing, p. 249.]

year. Tobacco-pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) in Spring Swamp Path. I came out of the thick, dark, swampy wood as from night into day. Having forgotten the daylight, I was surprised to see how bright it was. I had light enough, methought, and here was an afternoon sun illumining all the landscape. It was a surprise to me to see how much brighter an ordinary afternoon is than the light which penetrates a thick wood.

One of these drooping clusters of potato balls would be as good a symbol, emblem, of the year's fertility as anything, — better surely than a bunch of grapes. Fruit of the strong soil, containing potash (?). The vintage is come; the olive is ripe.

> "I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude;
> And with forc'd fingers rude,
> Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year;"

Why not for my coat-of-arms, for device, a drooping cluster of potato balls, — in a *potato* field? [1]

What right has a New England poet to sing of wine, who never saw a vineyard, who obtains his liquor from the grocer, who would not dare, if he could, tell him what it is composed of. A Yankee singing in praise of wine! It is not sour grapes in this case, it is sweet grapes; the more inaccessible they are the sweeter they are. It seemed to me that the year had nothing so much to brag of as these potato balls. Do they not concern New-Englanders a thousand times more than all her grapes? In Moore's new field they grow, cultivated with the bog hoe, manured with ashes and sphagnum. How they take to the virgin soil! [2] Shannon tells me that he took

[1] [Channing, pp. 75, 216.] [2] [Channing, p. 216.]

a piece of bog land of Augustus Hayden, cleared, turned up the stumps and roots and burned it over, making a coat of ashes six inches deep, then planted potatoes. He never put a hoe to it till he went to dig them; then between 8 o'clock A. M. and 5 P. M. he and another man dug and housed seventy-five bushels apiece!!

Cohush now in fruit, ivory-white berries tipped *now* with black on stout red pedicels, — *Actæa alba. Collinsonia Canadensis*, horseweed. I had discovered this singular flower there new to me, and, having a botany by me, looked it out. What a surprise and disappointment, what an insult and impertinence to my curiosity and expectation, to have given me the name "horseweed!"

Cohush Swamp is about twenty rods by three or four. Among rarer plants it contains the basswood, the black (as well as white) ash, the fever-bush, the cohush, the collinsonia, not to mention sassafras, poison sumach, ivy, agrimony, *Arum triphyllum*, (sweet viburnum (?) in hedges near by), ground-nut, touch-me-not (as high as your head), and *Eupatorium purpureum* (eight feet, eight inches high, with a large convex corymb (hemispherical) of many stories, fourteen inches wide; width of plant from tip of leaf to tip of leaf two feet, diameter of stalk one inch at ground, leaves seven in a whorl). Rare plants seem to love certain localities. As if the original Conant had been a botanist and endeavored to form an arboretum. A natural arboretum?

The handsome sweet viburnum berries, now red on one cheek.

It was the filiform crowfoot (*Ranunculus filiformis*)

that I saw by the riverside the other day and to-day. The season advances apace. The flowers of the nettle-leaved vervain are now near the ends of the spike, like the blue. *Utricularia inflata*, whorled bladderwort, floating on the water at same place. *Gentiana Saponaria* budded. *Gerardia flava* at Conant's Grove.

Half an hour before sunset I was at Tupelo Cliff, when, looking up from my botanizing (I had been examining the *Ranunculus filiformis*, the *Sium latifolium* (? ?), and the obtuse galium on the muddy shore), I saw the seal of evening on the river. There was a quiet beauty in the landscape at that hour which my senses were prepared to appreciate. The sun going down on the west side, that hand being already in shadow for the most part, but his rays lighting up the water and the willows and pads even more than before. His rays then fell at right angles on their stems. I sitting on the old brown geologic rocks, their feet submerged and covered with weedy moss (utricularia roots?). Sometimes their tops are submerged. The cardinal-flowers standing by me. The trivialness of the day is past. The greater stillness, the *serenity* of the air, its coolness and transparency, the mistiness being condensed, are favorable to thought. (The pensive eve.) The coolness of evening comes to condense the haze of noon and make the air transparent and the outline of objects firm and distinct, and chaste (chaste eve); even as I am made more vigorous by my bath, am more *continent* of thought. After bathing, even at noonday, a man realizes a morning or evening life.[1] The evening air is such a bath

[1] [Channing, pp. 301, 302.]

for both mind and body. When I have walked all day in vain under the torrid sun, and the world has been all trivial, — as well field and wood as highway, — then at eve the sun goes down westward, and the wind goes down with it, and the dews begin to purify the air and make it transparent, and the lakes and rivers acquire a glassy stillness, reflecting the skies, the reflex of the day. I too am at the top of my condition for perceiving beauty. Thus, long after feeding, the diviner faculties begin to be fed, to feel their oats, their nutriment, and are not oppressed by the belly's load. It is abstinence from loading the belly anew until the brain and divine faculties have felt their vigor. Not till some hours does my food invigorate my brain, — ascendeth into the brain. We practice at this hour an involuntary abstinence. We are comparatively chaste and temperate as Eve herself; the nutriment is just reaching the brain. Every sound is music now. The grating of some distant boat which a man is launching on the rocky bottom, — though here is no man nor inhabited house, nor even cultivated field, in sight, — this is heard with such distinctness that I listen with pleasure as if it was [*sic*] music. The attractive point is that line where the water meets the land, not distinct, but known to exist. The willows are not the less interesting because of their nakedness below. How rich, like what we love to read of South American primitive forests, is the scenery of this river! What luxuriance of weeds, what depth of mud along its sides! These old antehistoric, geologic, antediluvian rocks, which only primitive wading birds, still lingering among us, are worthy to tread. The season

which we seem to *live* in anticipation of is arrived. The water, indeed, reflects heaven because my mind does; such is its own serenity, its transparency and stillness.

With what sober joy I stand to let the water drip from me and feel my fresh vigor, who have been bathing in the same tub which the muskrat uses! Such a medicated bath as only nature furnishes. A fish leaps, and the dimple he makes is observed now. How ample and generous was nature! My inheritance is not narrow.[1] Here is no other this evening. Those resorts which I most love and frequent, numerous and vast as they are, are as it were given up to me, as much as if I were an autocrat or owner of the world, and by my edicts excluded men from my territories. Perchance there is some advantage here not enjoyed in older countries. There are said to be two thousand inhabitants in Concord, and yet I find such ample space and verge, even miles of walking every day in which I do not meet nor see a human being, and often not very recent traces of them. So much of man as there is in your mind, there will be in your eye. Methinks that for a great part of the time, as much as it is possible, I walk as one possessing the advantages of human culture, fresh from society of men, but turned loose into the woods, the only man in nature, walking and meditating to a great extent as if man and his customs and institutions were not. The catbird, or the jay, is sure of the whole of your ear now. Each noise is like a stain on pure glass. The rivers now, these great blue subterranean heavens, reflecting the supernal skies and red-tinted clouds.

[1] [Channing, p. 301.]

A fly (or gnat?) will often buzz round you and persecute you like an imp. How much of imp-like, pestering character they express! (I hear a boy driving home his cows.) What unanimity between the water and the sky! — one only a little denser element than the other. The grossest part of heaven. Think of a mirror on so large a scale! Standing on distant hills, you see the heavens reflected, the evening sky, in some low lake or river in the valley, as perfectly as in any mirror they could be. Does it not prove how intimate heaven is with earth?

We commonly sacrifice to supper this serene and sacred hour. Our customs turn the hour of sunset to a trivial time, as at the meeting of two roads, one coming from the noon, the other leading to the night. It might be [well] if our repasts were taken out-of-doors, in view of the sunset and the rising stars; if there were two persons whose pulses beat together, if men cared for the κόσμος, or *beauty* of the world; if men were *social* in a high and rare sense; if they associated on high levels; if we took in with our tea a draught of the transparent, dew-freighted evening air; if, with our bread and butter, we took a slice of the red western sky; if the smoking, steaming urn were the vapor on a thousand lakes and rivers and meads.

The air of the valleys at this hour is the distilled essence of all those fragrances which during the day have been filling and have been dispersed in the atmosphere. The fine fragrances, perchance, which have floated in the upper atmospheres have settled to these low vales!

I talked of buying Conantum once, but for want of money we did not come to terms. But I have farmed it in my own fashion every year since.

I have no objection to giving the names of some naturalists, men of flowers, to plants, if by their lives they have identified themselves with them. There may be a few Kalmias. But it must be done very sparingly, or, rather, discriminatingly, and no man's name be used who has not been such a lover of flowers that the flowers themselves may be supposed thus to reciprocate his love.

VIII

SEPTEMBER, 1851

(ÆT. 34)

Sept. 1. *Mikania scandens,* with its purplish white flowers, now covering the button-bushes and willows by the side of the stream. *Bidens chrysanthemoides,* large-flowered bidens, edge of river. Various-colored polygonums standing high among the bushes and weeds by riverside, — white and reddish and red.

Is not disease the rule of existence? There is not a lily pad floating on the river but has been riddled by insects. Almost every shrub and tree has its gall, oftentimes esteemed its chief ornament and hardly to be distinguished from the fruit. If misery loves company, misery has company enough. Now, at midsummer, find me a perfect leaf or fruit.

The fruit of the trilliums is very handsome. I found some a month ago, a singular *red,* angular-cased pulp, drooping, with the old anthers surrounding it three quarters of an inch in diameter; and now there is another kind, a dense crowded cluster of many ovoid berries turning from green to scarlet or bright brick-color. Then there is the mottled fruit of the clustered Solomon's-seal, and also the greenish (with blue meat) fruit of the *Convallaria multiflora* dangling from the axils of the leaves.

Sept. 2. The dense fog came into my chamber early this morning, freighted with light, and woke me. It was, no doubt, lighter at that hour than if there had been no fog.

Not till after several months does an infant find its hands, and it may be seen looking at them with astonishment, holding them up to the light; and so also it finds its toes. How many faculties there are which we have never found![1] Some men, methinks, have found only their hands and feet. At least I have seen some who appeared never to have found their heads, but used them only instinctively, as the negro who butts with his,[2] or the water-carrier who makes a pack-horse of his. They have but partially found their heads.

We cannot write well or truly but what we write with gusto. The body, the senses, must conspire with the mind. Expression is the act of the whole man, that our speech may be vascular. The intellect is powerless to express thought without the aid of the heart and liver and of every member. Often I feel that my head stands out too dry, when it should be immersed. A writer, a man writing, is the scribe of all nature; he is the corn and the grass and the atmosphere writing. It is always essential that we love to do what we are doing, do it with a heart. The maturity of the mind, however, may perchance consist with a certain dryness.

There are flowers of thought, and there are leaves of thought; most of our thoughts are merely leaves, to which the thread of thought is the stem.

What affinity is it brings the goldfinch to the sun-

[1] [Channing, p. 203.]

[2] [Channing, p. 86.]

flower — both yellow — to pick its seeds? Whatever things I perceive with my entire man, those let me record, and it will be poetry. The sounds which I hear with the consent and coincidence of all my senses, these are significant and musical; at least, they only are heard.[1]

In a day or two the first message will be conveyed or transmitted over the magnetic telegraph through this town, as a thought traverses space, and no citizen of the town shall be aware of it. The atmosphere is full of telegraphs equally unobserved. We are not confined to Morse's or House's or Bain's line.

Raise some sunflowers to attract the goldfinches, to feed them as well as your hens. What a broad and loaded, bounteously filled platter of food is presented this *bon-vivant!*

Here is one of those thick fogs which last well into the day. While the farmer is concerned about the crops which his fields bear, I will be concerned about the fertility of my human farm. I will watch the winds and the rains as they affect the crop of thought, — the crop of crops, ripe thoughts, which glow and rustle and fill the air with fragrance for centuries. Is it a drought? How long since we had a rain? What is the state of the springs? Are the low springs high?

I now begin to pluck wild apples.

The difference is not great between some fruits in which the worm is always present and those gall fruits which were produced by the insect.

Old Cato says well, "*Patremfamilias vendacem, non*

[1] [Channing, p. 87.]

emacem, esse oportet." These Latin terminations express better than any English that I know the greediness, as it were, and tenacity of purpose with which the husbandman and householder is required to be a seller and not a buyer, — with mastiff-like tenacity, — these *lipped* words, which, like the lips of moose and browsing creatures, gather in the herbage and twigs with a certain greed. This termination *cious* adds force to a word, like the lips of browsing creatures, which greedily collect what the jaw holds; as in the word "tenacious" the first half represents the kind of jaw which holds, the last the lips which collect. It can only be pronounced by a certain opening and protruding of the lips; so "avaricious." These words express the sense of their simple roots with the addition, as it were, of a certain lip greediness. Hence "capacious" and "capacity," "emacity." When these expressive words are used, the hearer gets something to chew upon. To be a seller with the tenacity and firmness and steadiness of the jaws which hold and the greediness of the lips which collect. The audacious man not only dares, but he greedily collects more danger to dare. The avaricious man not only desires and satisfies his desire, but he collects ever new browse in anticipation of his ever-springing desires. What is *luscious* is especially enjoyed by the lips. The mastiff-mouthed are tenacious. To be a seller with mastiff-mouthed tenacity of purpose, with moose-lipped greediness, — ability to browse! To be edacious and voracious is to be not nibbling and swallowing merely, but eating and swallowing while the lips are greedily collecting more food.

There is a reptile in the throat of the greedy man always thirsting and famishing. It is not his own natural hunger and thirst which he satisfies.

The more we know about the ancients, the more we find that they were like the moderns. When I read Marcus Cato De Re Rustica, a small treatise or Farmer's Manual of those days, fresh from the field of Roman life, all reeking with and redolent of the life of those days, containing more indirect history than any of the histories of Rome of direct, — all of that time but that time, — *here* is a simple, direct, pertinent word addressed to the Romans. And where are *the Romans?* Rome and the Romans are commonly a piece of rhetoric. As if New England had disappeared poetically and there were left Buel's "Farmer's Companion," or the letters of Solon Robinson, or a volume of extracts from the *New England Farmer*. Though the Romans are no more but a fable and an ornament of rhetoric, we have here their *New England Farmer*, the very manual those Roman farmers read, speaking as if they were to hear it, its voice not silenced, as if Rome were still the mistress of the world, — as fresh as a dripping dish-cloth from a Roman kitchen.[1] As when you overhaul the correspondence of a man who died fifty years ago, with like surprise and feelings you overhaul the manuscripts of the Roman nation. There exist certain old papers, manuscripts, either the originals or faithful and trustworthy old copies of the originals, which were left by the Roman people. They have gone their way, but these old papers of all sorts remain. Among them there are some

[1] [Channing, pp. 60, 61.]

farm journals, or farm books; just such a collection of diary and memorandum — as when the cow calved, and the dimensions, with a plan, of the barn, and how much paid to Joe Farrar for work done on the farm, etc., etc. — as you might find in an old farmer's pocket-book to-day.

Indeed the farmer's was pretty much the same routine then as now. Cato says: "Sterquilinium magnum stude ut habeas. Stercus sedulo conserva, cum exportabis purgato et comminuito. Per autumnum evehito." (Study to have a great dungheap. Carefully preserve your dung, when you carry it out, make clean work of it and break it up fine. Carry it out during the autumn.) Just such directions as you find in the "Farmer's Almanack" to-day. It reminds me of what I see going on in our fields every autumn. As if the farmers of Concord were obeying Cato's directions. And Cato but repeated the maxims of a remote antiquity. Nothing can be more homely and suggestive of the every-day life of the Roman agriculturalists, thus supplying the very deficiencies in what is commonly called Roman history, *i. e.* revealing to us the actual life of the Romans, the how they got their living and what they did from day to day.[1]

They planted *rapa*, *raphanos*, *milium*, and *panicum* in low foggy land, *ager nebulosus*.

I see the farmer now — *i. e.* I shall in autumn — on every side carting out his manure and sedulously making his compost-heap, or scattering it over his grass ground and breaking it up with a mallet; and it reminds me of Cato's advice. He died one hundred and fifty

[1] [Channing, pp. 60, 61.]

years before Christ.[1] Before Christianity was heard of, this was done. A Roman family appears to have had a great supply of tubs and kettles.

A fire in the sitting-room to-day. Walk in the afternoon by Walden road and railroad to Minn's place, and round it to railroad and home. The first coolness is welcome, so serious and fertile of thought. My skin contracts, and I become more continent. Carried umbrellas, it mizzling. As in the night, now in the rain, I smell the fragrance of the woods. The prunella leaves have turned a delicate claret or lake color by the roadside. I am interested in these revolutions as much as in those of kingdoms. Is there not tragedy enough in the autumn? Walden seems to be going down at last. The pines are dead and leaning, red and half upset, about its shore. Thus, by its rising once in twenty-five years, perchance, it keeps an open shore, as if the ice had heaved them over. Found the succory at Minn's Bridge on railroad and beyond. Query: May not this and the tree-primrose and other plants be distributed from Boston on the rays of the railroads, the seeds mixing with the grains and all kinds of dirt and being blown from the passing freight-cars? The feathery-tailed fruit of the fertile flowers of the clematis conspicuous now.

The shorn meadows looked of a living green as we came home at eve, even greener than in spring. The *faenum cordum*, the aftermath, *sicilimenta de prato*, the second mowings of the meadow, this reminds me of, in Cato.[2]

[1] [Channing, p. 60.] [2] [Channing, p. 220.]

Sept. 3. Why was there never a poem on the cricket? Its creak seems to me to be one of the most prominent and obvious facts in the world, and the least heeded. In the report of a man's contemplations I look to see somewhat answering to this sound.[1] When I sat on Lee's Cliff the other day (August 29th), I saw a man working with a horse in a field by the river, carting dirt; and the horse and his relation to him struck me as very remarkable. There was the horse, a mere animated machine, — though his tail was brushing off the flies, — his whole existence subordinated to the man's, with no tradition, perhaps no instinct, in him of independence and freedom, of a time when he was wild and free, — completely humanized. No compact made with him that he should have the Saturday afternoons, or the Sundays, or any holidays. His independence never recognized, it being now quite forgotten both by men and by horses that the horse was ever free. For I am not aware that there are any wild horses known surely not to be descended from tame ones. Assisting that man to pull down that bank and spread it over the meadow; only keeping off the flies with his tail, and stamping, and catching a mouthful of grass or leaves from time to time, on his own account, — all the rest for man. It seemed hardly worth while that he should be *animated* for this. It was plain that the man was not educating the horse; not trying to develop his nature, but merely getting work out of him. That mass of animated matter seemed more completely the servant of man than any inanimate. For slaves have their holidays; a heaven

[1] [Channing, p. 78.]

is conceded to them, but to the horse none. Now and forever he is man's slave. The more I considered, the more the man seemed akin to the horse; only his was the stronger will of the two. For a little further on I saw an Irishman shovelling, who evidently was as much tamed as the horse. He had stipulated that to a certain extent his independence be recognized, and yet really he was but little more independent. I had always instinctively regarded the horse as a free people somewhere, living wild. Whatever has not come under the sway of man is wild. In this sense original and independent men are wild, — not tamed and broken by society. Now for my part I have such a respect for the horse's nature as would tempt me to let him alone; not to interfere with him, — his walks, his diet, his loves. But by mankind he is treated simply as if he were an engine which must have rest and is sensible of pain. Suppose that every squirrel were made to turn a coffee-mill! Suppose that the gazelles were made to draw milk-carts!

There he was with his tail cut off, because it was in the way, or to suit the taste of his owner; his mane trimmed, and his feet shod with iron that he might wear longer. What is a horse but an animal that has lost its liberty? What is it but a system of slavery? and do you not thus by *insensible* and unimportant degrees come to human slavery? Has lost its liberty! — and has man got any more liberty himself for having robbed the horse, or has he lost just as much of his own, and become more like the horse he has robbed? Is not the other end of the bridle in this case, too, coiled round his own neck? Hence stable-boys, jockeys, all

that class that is daily transported by fast horses. There he stood with his oblong square figure (his tail being cut off) seen against the water, brushing off the flies with his tail and stamping, braced back while the man was filling the cart.[1]

It is a very remarkable and significant fact that, though no man is quite well or healthy, yet every one believes practically that health is the rule and disease the exception, and each invalid is wont to think himself in a minority, and to postpone somewhat of endeavor to another state of existence. But it may be some encouragement to men to know that in this respect they stand on the same platform, that disease is, in fact, the *rule* of our terrestrial life and the prophecy of a *celestial* life. Where is the coward who despairs because he is sick? Every one may live either the life of Achilles or of Nestor. Seen in this light, our life with all its diseases will look healthy, and in one sense the more healthy as it is the more diseased. Disease is not the accident of the individual, nor even of the generation, but of life itself. In some form, and to some degree or other, it is one of the permanent conditions of life. It is, nevertheless, a cheering fact that men affirm health unanimously, and esteem themselves miserable failures. Here was no blunder. They gave us life on exactly these conditions, and methinks we shall live it with more heart when we perceive clearly that these are the terms on which we have it. Life is a warfare, a struggle, and the diseases of the body answer to the troubles and defeats of the spirit. Man begins by quarrelling with the animal in him, and

[1] [Channing, pp. 173–175.]

the result is immediate disease. In proportion as the spirit is the more ambitious and persevering, the more obstacles it will meet with. It is as a seer that man asserts his disease to be exceptional.[1]

2 P. M.—To Hubbard's Swimming-Place and Grove in rain.

As I went under the new telegraph-wire, I heard it vibrating like a harp high overhead. It was as the sound of a far-off glorious life, a supernal life, which came down to us, and vibrated the lattice-work of this life of ours.[2]

The melons and the apples seem at once to feed my brain.

Here comes a laborer from his dinner to resume his work at clearing out a ditch notwithstanding the rain, remembering as Cato says, *per ferias potuisse fossas veteres tergeri*, that in the holidays old ditches might have been cleared out. One would think that I were the paterfamilias come to see if the steward of my farm has done his duty.

The ivy leaves are turning red. Fall dandelions stand thick in the meadows.

How much the Roman must have been indebted to his agriculture, dealing with the earth, its clods and stubble, its dust and mire. Their farmer consuls were their glory, and they well knew the farm to be the nursery of soldiers. Read Cato to see what kind of legs the Romans stood on.

The leaves of the hardhack are somewhat appressed,

[1] [Channing, p. 164.] [2] [Channing, p. 199.]

clothing the stem and showing their downy under sides like white, waving wands. Is it peculiar to the season, or the rain, — or the plant?

Walk often in drizzly weather, for then the small weeds (especially if they stand on bare ground), covered with rain-drops like beads, appear more beautiful than ever, — the hypericums, for instance. They are equally beautiful when covered with dew, fresh and adorned, almost spirited away, in a robe of dewdrops.[1]

Some farmers have begun to thresh and winnow their oats.

Identified spotted spurge (*Euphorbia maculata*), apparently out of blossom. Shepherd's-purse and chickweed.

As for walking, the inhabitants of large English towns are confined almost exclusively to their parks and to the highways. The few footpaths in their vicinities "are gradually vanishing," says Wilkinson, "under the encroachments of the proprietors." He proposes that the people's right to them be asserted and defended and that they be kept in a passable state at the public expense. "This," says he, "would be easily done by means of asphalt laid upon a good foundation" ! ! ! So much for walking, and the prospects of walking, in the neighborhood of English large towns.

Think of a man — he may be a genius of some kind — being confined to a highway and a park for his world to range in! I should die from mere nervousness at the thought of such confinement. I should hesitate before I were born, if those terms could be made known to me

[1] [Channing, p. 216.]

beforehand. Fenced in forever by those green barriers of fields, where gentlemen are seated! Can they be said to be inhabitants of this globe? Will they be content to inhabit heaven thus partially?

Sept. 4. 8 A. M. — A clear and pleasant day after the rain. Start for Boon's Pond in Stow with C. Every sight and sound was the more interesting for the clear atmosphere. When you are starting away, leaving your more familiar fields, for a little adventure like a walk, you look at every object with a traveller's, or at least with historical, eyes; you pause on the first bridge, where an ordinary walk hardly commences, and begin to observe and moralize like a traveller. It is worth the while to see your native village thus sometimes, as if you were a traveller passing through it, commenting on your neighbors as strangers.[1] We stood thus on Wood's Bridge, the first bridge, in the capacity of pilgrims and strangers to its familiarity, giving it one more chance with us, though our townsmen who passed may not have perceived it.

There was a pretty good-sized pickerel poised over the sandy bottom close to the shore and motionless as a shadow. It is wonderful how they resist the slight current of our river and remain thus stationary for hours. He, no doubt, saw us plainly on the bridge, — in the sunny water, his whole form distinct and his shadow, — motionless as the steel trap which does not spring till the fox's foot has touched it.

—— ——'s dog sprang up, ran out, and growled at

[1] [Channing, p. 222.]

us, and in his eye I seemed to see the eye of his master. I have no doubt but that, as is the master, such in course of time tend to become his herds and flocks as well as dogs. One man's oxen will be clever and solid, another's mischievous, another's mangy, — in each case like their respective owners. No doubt man impresses his own character on the beasts which he tames and employs; they are not only humanized, but they acquire his particular human nature.[1] How much oxen are like farmers generally, and cows like farmers' wives! and young steers and heifers like farmers' boys and girls! The farmer acts on the ox, and the ox reacts on the farmer. They do not meet half-way, it is true, but they do meet at a distance from the centre of each proportionate to each one's intellectual power.[2] The farmer is ox-like in his thought, in his walk, in his strength, in his trustworthiness, in his taste.[3]

Hosmer's man was cutting his millet, and his buckwheat already lay in *red* piles in the field.

The first picture we noticed was where the road turned among the pitch pines and showed the Hadley house, with the high wooded hill behind with dew and sun on it, the gracefully winding road path, and a more distant horizon on the right of the house. Just beyond, on the left, it was pleasant walking where the road was shaded by a high hill, as it can be only in the morning. Even in the morning that additional coolness and early-dawn-like feeling of a more sacred and earlier season are agreeable.

[1] [Channing, p. 76.] [2] [*Ibid.*]
[3] [Channing, p. 175.]

The lane in front of Tarbell's house, which is but little worn and appears to lead nowhere, though it has so wide and all-engulfing an opening, suggested that such things might be contrived for effect in laying out grounds. (Only those things are sure to have the greatest and best effect, which like this were not contrived for the sake of effect.) An open path which would suggest walking and adventuring on it, the going to some place strange and far away. It would make you think of or imagine distant places and spaces greater than the estate.

It was pleasant, looking back just beyond, to see a heavy shadow (made by some high birches) reaching quite across the road. Light and shadow are sufficient contrast and furnish sufficient excitement when we are well.

Now we were passing the vale of Brown and Tarbell, a sunshiny mead pastured by cattle and sparkling with dew, the sound of crows and swallows heard in the air, and leafy-columned elms seen here and there shining with dew. The morning freshness and unworldliness of that domain![1] The vale of Tempe and of Arcady is not farther off than are the conscious lives of men from their opportunities. Our life is as far from corresponding to its scenery as we are distant from Tempe and Arcadia; that is to say, they are far away because we are far from living natural lives. How absurd it would be to insist on the vale of Tempe in particular when we have such vales as we have!

In the Marlborough road, in the woods, I saw a pur-

[1] [Channing, p. 222.]

ple streak like a stain on the red pine leaves and sand under my feet, which I was surprised to find was made by a dense mass of purple fleas, somewhat like snow-fleas, — a faint purple stain as if some purple dye had been spilt. What is that slender pink flower that I find in the Marlborough road, — smaller than a snap-dragon? The slender stems of grass which hang over the ruts and horses' path in this little-frequented road are so laden with dew that I am compelled to hold a bush before me to shake it off. The jays scream on the right and left and are seen flying further off as we go by.

We drink in the meadow at Second Division Brook, then sit awhile to watch its yellowish pebbles and the cress (?) in it and other weeds. The ripples cover its surface like a network and are faithfully reflected on the bottom. In some places, the sun reflected from ripples on a flat stone looks like a golden comb. The whole brook seems as busy as a loom: it is a woof and warp of ripples; fairy fingers are throwing the shuttle at every step, and the long, waving brook is the fine product. The water is wonderfully clear.

To have a hut here, and a footpath to the brook! For roads, I think that a poet cannot tolerate more than a footpath through the fields; that is wide enough, and for purposes of winged poesy suffices. It is not for the muse to speak of cart-paths. I would fain travel by a footpath round the world.[1] I do not ask the railroads of commerce, not even the cart-paths of the farmer. Pray, what other path would you have than a footpath? What

[1] [Channing, p. 69.]

else should wear a path? This is the track of man alone. What more suggestive to the pensive walker? [1] One walks in a wheel-track with less emotion; he is at a greater distance from man; but this footpath was, perchance, worn by the bare feet of human beings, and he cannot but think with interest of them.

The grapes, though their leaves are withering and falling, are yet too sour to eat.

In the summer we lay up a stock of experiences for the winter, as the squirrel of nuts, — something for conversation in winter evenings. I love to think then of the more distant walks I took in summer.[2]

At the powder-mills the carbonic acid gas in the road from the building where they were making charcoal made us cough for twenty or thirty rods.

Saw some gray squirrels whirling their cylinder by the roadside. How fitted that cylinder to this animal! "A squirrel is easily taught to turn his cylinder" might be a saying frequently applicable. And as they turned, one leaped over or dodged under another most gracefully and unexpectedly, with interweaving motions. It was the circus and menagerie combined. So human they were, exhibiting themselves.

In the Marlborough road, I forgot to say, we brushed the *Polygonum articulatum* with its spikes of reddish-white flowers, a slender and tender plant which loves the middle of dry and sandy not-much-travelled roads. To find that the very atoms bloom, that there are

[1] *Vide* last journal for bare foot track in Corner road [p. 328 of this volume].

[2] [Channing, p. 70.]

flowers we rudely brush against which only the microscope reveals!

It is wise to write on many subjects, to try many themes, that so you may find the right and inspiring one. Be greedy of occasions to express your thought. Improve the opportunity to draw analogies. There are innumerable avenues to a perception of the truth. Improve the suggestion of each object however humble, however slight and transient the provocation. What else is there to be improved? Who knows what opportunities he may neglect? It is not in vain that the mind turns aside this way or that: follow its leading; apply it whither it inclines to go. Probe the universe in a myriad points. Be avaricious of these impulses. You must try a thousand themes before you find the right one, as nature makes a thousand acorns to get one oak. He is a wise man and experienced who has taken many views; to whom stones and plants and animals and a myriad objects have each suggested something, contributed something.[1]

And now, methinks, this wider wood-path [2] is not bad, for it admits of society more conveniently. Two can walk side by side in it in the ruts, aye, and one more in the horse-track.[3] The Indian walked in single file, more solitary, — not side by side, chatting as he went. The woodman's cart and sled make just the path two walkers want through the wood.

Beyond the powder-mills we watched some fat oxen,

[1] [Channing, p. 86.]

[2] By Second Division Brook.

[3] [Channing, p. 70.]

elephantine, behemoths, — one Rufus-Hosmer-eyed, with the long lash and projecting eye-ball.

Now past the paper-mills, by the westernmost road east of the river, the first new ground we've reached.

Not only the prunella turns *lake*, but the *Hypericum Virginicum* in the hollows by the roadside, — a handsome blush. A part of the autumnal tints, ripe leaves. Leaves acquire red blood. Red colors touch our blood, and excite us as well as cows and geese.

And now we leave the road and go through the woods and swamps toward Boon's Pond, crossing two or three roads and by Potter's house in Stow; still on east of river. The fruit of the *Pyrola rotundifolia* in the damp woods. Larch trees in Stow about the houses. Beyond Potter's we struck into the extensive wooded plain where the ponds are found in Stow, Sudbury, and Marlborough. Part of it called Boon's Plain.[1] Boon said to have lived on or under Bailey's Hill at west of pond. Killed by Indians between Boon[']s Pond] and White's Pond as he was driving his ox-cart. The oxen ran off to Marlborough garrison-house. His remains have been searched for. A sandy plain, a large level tract. The pond shores handsome enough, but water shallow and muddy looking. Well-wooded shores. The maples begin to show red about it. Much fished.

Saw a load of sunflowers in a farmers [*sic*]. Such is the destiny of this large, coarse flower; the farmers gather it like pumpkins.

Returned by railroad down the Assabet. A potato-field yellow with wild radish. But no good place to

[1] *Vide* hawks [p. 480].

bathe for three miles, Knight's new dam has so raised the river. A permanent freshet, as it were, the fluviatile trees standing dead for fish hawk perches, and the water stagnant for weeds to grow in. You have only to dam up a running stream to give it the aspect of a dead stream, and to some degree restore its primitive wild appearance. Tracts made inaccessible to man and at the same time more fertile. Some speculator comes and dams up the stream below, and lo! the water stands over all meadows, making impassable morasses and dead trees for fish hawks, — a wild, stagnant, fenny country, the last gasp of wildness before it yields to the civilization of the factory, — to cheer the eyes of the factory people and educate them. It makes a little wilderness above the factories.

The woodbine now begins to hang red about the maples and other trees.

As I looked back up the stream from near the bridge (I suppose on the road from Potter's house to Stow), I on the railroad, I saw the ripples sparkling in the sun, reminding me of the sparkling icy fleets which I saw last winter; and I saw how one corresponded to the other, ice waves to water ones; the erect ice-flakes were the waves stereotyped. It was the same sight, the reflection of the sun sparkling from a myriad slanting surfaces at a distance, a rippled water surface or a crystallized frozen one.

Here crossed the river and climbed the high hills on the west side. The walnut trees con- formed in their branches to the slope of the hill, being just as high from the ground on the upper side as on the lower.

On all sides now I see and smell the withering leaves of brush that has been cut to clear the land. I see some blackened tracts which have been burnt over. It is remarkable, for it is rare to see the surface of the earth black. And in the horizon I can see the smokes of several fires. The farmers improve this season, which is the driest, their haying being done and their harvest not begun, to do these jobs, — burn brush, build walls, dig ditches, cut turf. This is what I find them doing all over the country now; also topping corn and digging potatoes.

Saw quite a flock, for the first time, of goldfinches.

On the high, round hills in the east and southeast of Stow, — perchance they are called the Assabet Hills, — rising directly from the river. They are the highest I know rising thus. The rounded hills of Stow. A hill and valley country. Very different from Concord.

It had been a warm day, especially warm to the head. I do not perspire as in the early summer, but am sensible of the ripening heat, more as if by contact. Suddenly the wind changed to east, and the atmosphere grew more and more hazy and thick on that side, obstructing the view, while it was yet clear in the west. I thought it was the result of the cooler air from over the sea meeting and condensing the vapor in the warm air of the land. That was the haze, or thin, dry fog which some call smoke. It gradually moved westward and affected the prospect on that side somewhat. It was a very thin fog invading all the east. I felt the cool air from the ocean, and it was very refreshing. I opened my bosom

and my mouth to inhale it. Very delicious and invigorating.

We sat on the top of those hills looking down on the new brick ice-house. Where there are several hills near together, you cannot determine at once which is the highest, whether the one you are on or the next. So, when great men are assembled, each yields an uncertain respect to the other, as if it were not certain whose crown rose highest.

Under the nut trees on these hills, the grass is short and green as if grazed close by cattle who had stood there for shade, making a distinct circular yard. Yet, as there is no dung and the form corresponds so closely to the tree, I doubt if that can be the cause.

On hillside north of river above powder-mills the *Pycnanthemum incanum* (mountain mint, calamint) and the *Lespedeza violacea*.

Saw what I thought a small red dog in the road, which cantered along over the bridge this side the powder-mills and then turned into the woods. This decided me — this turning into the woods — that it was a fox. The dog of the woods, the dog that is more at home in the woods than in the roads and fields. I do not often see a dog turning into the woods.

Some large white (?) oak acorns this side the last-named bridge. A few oaks stand in the pastures still, great ornaments. I do not see any young ones springing up to supply their places. Will there be any a hundred years hence? These are the remnants of the primitive wood, methinks. We are a young people and have not learned by experience the consequence of cutting off the

forest. One day they will be planted, methinks, and nature reinstated to some extent.

I love to see the yellow knots and their lengthened stain on the dry, unpainted pitch [?]-pine boards on barns and other buildings, — the Dugan house, for instance. The indestructible yellow fat! it fats my eyes to see it; worthy for art to imitate, telling of branches in the forest once.

Sept. 5. No doubt, like plants, we are fed through the atmosphere, and the varying atmospheres of various seasons of the year feed us variously. How often we are sensible of being thus fed and invigorated! And all nature contributes to this aerial diet its food of finest quality. Methinks that in the fragrance of the fruits I get a finer flavor, and in beauty (which is appreciated by sight — the taste and smell of the eye) a finer still. As Wilkinson says, "the physical man himself is the builded aroma of the world. This then, at least, is the office of the lungs — to drink the atmosphere with the planet dissolved in it." "What is the import of *change of air*, and how each pair of lungs has a *native air* under some one dome of the sky."

Wilkinson's book to some extent realizes what I have dreamed of, — a return to the primitive analogical and derivative senses of words. His ability to trace analogies often leads him to a truer word than more remarkable writers have found; as when, in his chapter on the human skin, he describes the papillary cutis as "an encampment of small conical tents coextensive with the surface of the body." The faith he puts in old and cur-

rent expressions as having sprung from an instinct wiser than science, and safely to be trusted if they can be interpreted. The man of science discovers no world for the mind of man with all its faculties to inhabit. Wilkinson finds a *home* for the imagination, and it is no longer outcast and homeless. All perception of truth is the detection of an analogy; we reason from our hands to our head.

It is remarkable that Kalm says in 1748 (being in Philadelphia): "Coals have not yet been found in Pennsylvania; but people pretend to have seen them higher up in the country among the natives. Many people however agree that they are met with in great quantity more to the north, near Cape Breton."

As we grow old we live more coarsely, we relax a little in our disciplines, and, to some extent, cease to obey our finest instincts. We are more careless about our diet and our chastity. But we should be fastidious to the extreme of sanity.[1] All wisdom is the reward of a discipline, conscious or unconscious.

By moonlight at Potter's Field toward Bear Garden Hill, 8 P. M. The whip-poor-wills sing.

Cultivate reverence. It is as if you were so much more respectable yourself. By the quality of a man's writing, by the elevation of its tone, you may measure his self-respect. How shall a man continue his culture after manhood?

Moonlight on Fair Haven Pond seen from the Cliffs. A sheeny lake in the midst of a boundless forest, the

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 468; *Misc.*, Riv. 270.]

windy surf sounding freshly and wildly in the single pine behind you; the silence of hushed wolves in the wilderness, and, as you fancy, moose looking off from the shore of the lake. The stars of poetry and history and unexplored nature looking down on the scene. This is my world now, with a dull whitish mark curving northward through the forest marking the outlet to the lake. Fair Haven by moonlight lies there like a lake in the Maine wilderness in the midst of a primitive forest untrodden by man. This light and this hour take the civilization all out of the landscape. Even in villages dogs bay the moon; in forests like this we listen to hear wolves howl to Cynthia.

Even at this hour in the evening the crickets chirp, the small birds peep, the wind roars in the wood, as if it were just before dawn. The moonlight seems to linger as if it were giving way to the light of coming day.

The landscape seen from the slightest elevation by moonlight is seen remotely, and flattened, as it were, into mere light and shade, open field and forest, like the surface of the earth seen from the top of a mountain.

How much excited we are, how much recruited, by a great many particular fragrances! A field of ripening corn, now at night, that has been topped, with the stalks stacked up to dry, — an inexpressibly dry, rich, sweet, ripening scent.[1] I feel as if I were an ear of ripening corn myself. Is not the whole air then a compound of such odors undistinguishable? Drying corn-stalks in a field; what an herb-garden![2]

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 403.]

[2] [Channing, pp. 251, 252.]

Sept. 6. The other afternoon I met Sam H—— walking on the railroad between the depot and the back road. It was something quite novel to see him there, though the railroad there is only a short thoroughfare to the public road. It then occurred to me that I had never met Mr. H. on the railroad, though he walks every day, and moreover that it would be quite impossible for him to walk on the railroad, such a formalist as he is, such strait-jackets we weave for ourselves. He could do nothing that was not sanctioned by the longest use of men, and as men had voted in all their assemblies from the first to travel on the public way, he would confine himself to that. It would no doubt seem to him very improper, not to say undignified, to walk on the railroad; and then, is it not forbidden by the railroad corporations? I was sure he could not keep the railroad, but was merely using the thoroughfare here which a thousand pioneers had prepared for him. I stood to see what he would do. He turned off the rails directly on to the back road and pursued his walk. A passing train will never meet him on the railroad causeway. How much of the life of certain men *goes* to sustain, to make respected, the institutions of society. They are the ones who pay the heaviest tax. Here are certain valuable institutions which can only be sustained by a wonderful strain which appears all to come upon certain Spartans who volunteer. Certain men are always to be found — especially the children of our present institutions — who are born with an instinct to perceive them. They are, in effect, supported by a fund which society possesses for that end, or they receive a pension and their life

seems to be a sinecure, — but it is not. The unwritten laws are the most stringent. They are required to wear a certain dress. What an array of gentlemen whose sole employment — and it is no sinecure — is to support their dignity, and with it the dignity of so many indispensable institutions!

The use of many vegetables — wild plants — for food, which botanists relate, such as Kalm at Cap aux Oyes on the St. Lawrence, *viz.* the sea plantain, sea-rocket, sweet-gale, etc., etc., making us feel the poorer at first because we never use them, really advertises us of our superior riches, and shows to what extremities men have been driven in times of scarcity. No people that fare as well as we will grub these weeds out of the seashore.

2 P. M. — To Hapgood's in Acton direct, returning *via* Strawberry Hill and Smith's Road.

The ripening grapes begin to fill the air with their fragrance. The vervain will hardly do for a clock, for I perceive that some later and smaller specimens have not much more than begun to blossom, while most have done. Saw a tall pear tree by the roadside beyond Harris's in front of Hapgood's. Saw the lambkill (*Kalmia angustifolia*) in blossom — a few fresh blossoms at *the ends* of the fresh twigs — on Strawberry Hill, beautiful bright flowers. Apparently a new spring with it, while seed vessels, apparently of this year, hung dry below.

From Strawberry Hill the first, but a very slight, glimpse of Nagog Pond by standing up on the wall. That is enough to relate of a hill, methinks, that its

elevation gives you the first sight of some distant lake. The horizon is remarkably blue with mist this afternoon. Looking from this hill over Acton, successive valleys filled with blue mist appear, and divided by darker lines of wooded hills. The shadows of the elms are deepened, as if the whole atmosphere were permeated by floods of ether. Annursnack never looked so well as now seen from this hill. The ether gives a velvet softness to the whole landscape. The hills float in it. A blue veil is drawn over the earth.

The elecampane (*Inula Helenium*), with its broad leaves wrinkled underneath and the remains of sunflower-like blossoms, in front of Nathan Brooks's, Acton, and near J. H. Wheeler's. *Prenanthes alba;* this Gray calls *Nabalus albus*, white lettuce or rattlesnake-root. Also I *seem* (?) to have found *Nabalus Fraseri*, or lion's-foot.

Every morning for a week there has been a fog which all disappeared by seven or eight o'clock.

A large field of sunflowers for hens now in full bloom at Temple's, surrounding the house, and now, at 6 o'clock P. M., facing the east.

The larches in the front yards, both Scotch and American, have turned red. Their fall has come.

Sept. 7. We sometimes experience a mere fullness of life, which does not find any channels to flow into. We are stimulated, but to no obvious purpose. I feel myself uncommonly prepared for *some* literary work, but I can select no work. I am prepared not so much for contemplation, as for forceful expression. I am braced

both physically and intellectually. It is not so much the music as the marching to the music that I feel. I feel that the juices of the fruits which I have eaten, the melons and apples, have ascended to my brain and are stimulating it. They give me a heady force. Now I can write nervously. Carlyle's writing is for the most part of this character.

Miss Martineau's last book is not so bad as the timidity which fears its influence. As if the popularity of this or that book would be so fatal, and man would not still be man in the world. Nothing is so much to be feared as fear. Atheism may comparatively be popular with God himself.[1]

What shall we say of these timid folk who carry the principle of thinking nothing and doing nothing and being nothing to such an extreme? As if, in the absence of thought, that vast yearning of their natures for something to fill the vacuum made the least traditionary expression and shadow of a thought to be clung to with instinctive tenacity. They atone for their producing nothing by a brutish respect for something. They are as simple as oxen, and as guiltless of thought and reflection. Their reflections are reflected from other minds. The creature of institutions, bigoted and a conservatist, can say nothing hearty. He cannot meet life with life, but only with words. He rebuts you by avoiding you. He is shocked like a woman.

Our ecstatic states, which appear to yield so little fruit, have this value at least: though in the seasons when our genius reigns we may be powerless for ex-

[1] [Channing, p. 90.]

pression, yet, in calmer seasons, when our talent is active, the memory of those rarer moods comes to color our picture and is the permanent paint-pot, as it were, into which we dip our brush. Thus no life or experience goes unreported at last; but if it be not solid gold it is gold-leaf, which gilds the furniture of the mind. It is an experience of infinite beauty on which we unfailingly draw, which enables us to exaggerate ever truly. Our moments of inspiration are not lost though we have no particular poem to show for them; for those experiences have left an indelible impression, and we are ever and anon reminded of them. Their truth subsides, and in cooler moments we can use them as paint to gild and adorn our prose. When I despair to sing them, I will remember that they will furnish me with paint with which to adorn and preserve the works of talent one day. They are like a pot of pure ether. They lend the writer when the moment comes a certain superfluity of wealth, making his expression to overrun and float itself. It is the difference between our river, now parched and dried up, exposing its unsightly and weedy bottom, and the same when, in the spring, it covers all the meads with a chain of placid lakes, reflecting the forests and the skies.

We are receiving our portion of the infinite. The art of life! Was there ever anything memorable written upon it? By what disciplines to secure the most life, with what care to watch our thoughts. To observe what transpires, not in the street, but in the mind and heart of me! I do not remember any page which will tell me how to spend this afternoon. I do not so much wish to

know how to economize time as how to spend it, by what means to grow rich, that the day may not have been in vain.

What if one moon has come and gone with its world of poetry, its weird teachings, its oracular suggestions? So divine a creature, freighted with hints for me, and I not use her! One moon gone by unnoticed ! ! Suppose you attend to the hints, to the suggestions, which the moon makes for one month, — commonly in vain, — will they not be very different from anything in literature or religion or philosophy?[1]

The scenery, when it is truly seen, reacts on the life of the seer. How to live. How to get the most life. As if you were to teach the young hunter how to entrap his game. How to extract its honey from the flower of the world. That is my every-day business. I am as busy as a bee about it. I ramble over all fields on that errand, and am never so happy as when I feel myself heavy with honey and wax. I am like a bee searching the livelong day for the sweets of nature. Do I not impregnate and intermix the flowers, produce rare and finer varieties by transferring my eyes from one to another? I do as naturally and as joyfully, with my own humming music, seek honey all the day. With what honeyed thought any experience yields me I take a bee line to my cell. It is with flowers I would deal. Where is the flower, there is the honey, — which is perchance the nectareous portion of the fruit, — there is to be the fruit, and no doubt flowers are thus colored and painted to attract and guide the bee. So by the dawning or radi-

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 324; Riv. 398.]

ance of beauty are we advertised where is the honey and the fruit of thought, of discourse, and of action. We are first attracted by the beauty of the flower, before we discover the honey which is a foretaste of the future fruit. Did not the young Achilles (?) spend his youth learning how to hunt? The art of spending a day. If it is possible that we may be addressed, it behooves us to be attentive. If by watching all day and all night I may detect some trace of the Ineffable, then will it not be worth the while to watch? Watch and pray without ceasing, but not necessarily in sadness. Be of good cheer. Those Jews were too sad: to another people a still deeper revelation may suggest only joy. Don't I know what gladness is? Is it but the reflex of sadness, its back side? In the Hebrew gladness, I hear but too distinctly still the sound of sadness retreating. Give me a gladness which has never given place to sadness.

I am convinced that men are not well employed, that this is not the way to spend a day. If by patience, if by watching, I can secure one new ray of light, can feel myself elevated for an instant upon Pisgah, the world which was dead prose to me become living and divine, shall I not watch ever? shall I not be a watchman henceforth? If by watching a whole year on the city's walls I may obtain a communication from heaven, shall I not do well to shut up my shop and turn a watchman? Can a youth, a man, do more wisely than to go where his life is to [be] found? As if I had suffered that to be rumor which may be verified. We are surrounded by a rich and fertile mystery. May we not probe it, pry into it, employ ourselves about it, a little? To devote your life

to the discovery of the divinity in nature or to the eating of oysters, would they not be attended with very different results?

I cannot *easily* buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are all ruled for dollars and cents.[1]

If the wine, the water, which will nourish me grows on the surface of the moon, I will do the best I can to go to the moon for it.

The discoveries which we make abroad are special and particular; those which we make at home are general and significant. The further off, the nearer the surface. The nearer home, the deeper. Go in search of the springs of life, and you will get exercise enough. Think of a man's swinging dumb-bells for his health, when those springs are bubbling in far-off pastures unsought by him! The seeming necessity of swinging dumb-bells proves that he has lost his way.[2]

To watch for, describe, all the divine features which I detect in Nature.

My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking-places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, in nature.

The mind may perchance be persuaded to act, to energize, by the action and energy of the body. Any kind of liquid will fetch the pump.

We all have our states of fullness and of emptiness, but we overflow at different points. One overflows through the sensual outlets, another through his heart, another through his head, and another perchance only

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 456; *Misc.*, Riv. 254, 255.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 209; Riv. 257.]

through the higher part of his head, or his poetic faculty. It depends on where each is tight and open. We can, perchance, then direct our nutriment to those organs we specially use.

How happens it that there are few men so well employed, — so much to their mind, — but that a little money or fame would buy them off from their present pursuits?

To Conantum *via* fields, Hubbard's Grove, and grain-field, to Tupelo Cliff and Conantum and returning over peak same way. 6 P. M.

I hear no larks sing at evening as in the spring, nor robins; only a few distressed notes from the robin. In Hubbard's grain-field beyond the brook, now the sun is down. The air is very still. There is a fine sound of crickets, not loud. The woods and single trees are heavier masses in the landscape than in the spring. Night has more allies. The heavy shadows of woods and trees are remarkable now. The meadows are green with their second crop. I hear only a tree-toad or song sparrow singing as in spring, at long intervals. The Roman wormwood is beginning to yellow-green my shoes, — intermingled with the blue-curls over the sand in this grain-field. Perchance some poet likened this yellow dust to the ambrosia of the gods. The birds are remarkably silent. At the bridge perceive the bats are out. And the yet silvery moon, not quite full, is reflected in the water. The water is perfectly still, and there is a red tinge from the evening sky in it.

The sky is singularly marked this evening. There are bars or rays of nebulous light springing from the

western horizon where the sun has disappeared, and alternating with beautiful blue rays, more blue by far than any other portion of the sky. These continue to diverge till they have reached the middle, and then converge to the eastern horizon, making a symmetrical figure like the divisions of a muskmelon, not very bright, yet distinct, though growing less and less bright toward the east. It was a quite remarkable phenomenon encompassing the heavens, as if you were to behold the divisions of a muskmelon thus alternately colored from within it. A proper vision, a colored mist. The most beautiful thing in nature is the sun reflected from a tearful cloud. These white and blue ribs embraced the earth. The two outer blues much the brightest and matching one another.

You hear the hum of mosquitoes.

Going up the road. The sound of the crickets is now much more universal and loud. Now in the fields I see the white streak of the neottia in the twilight. The whip-poor-wills sing far off. I smell burnt land somewhere. At Tupelo Cliff I hear the sound of singers on the river, young men and women, — which is unusual here, — returning from their row. Man's voice, thus uttered, fits well the spaces. It fills nature. And, after all, the singing of men is something far grander than any natural sound. It is wonderful that men do not oftener sing in the fields, by day and night. I bathe at the north side the Cliff, while the moon shines round the end of the rock. The opposite Cliff is reflected in the water. Then sit on the south side of the Cliff in the woods. One or two fireflies. Could it be a glow-worm?

I thought I saw one or two in the air. That is all in this walk. I hear a whip-poor-will uttering a cluck of suspicion in my rear. He is suspicious and inquisitive. The river stretches off southward from me. I see the sheeny portions of its western shore interruptedly for a quarter of a mile, where the moonlight is reflected from the pads, a strong, gleaming light while the water is lost in the obscurity. I hear the sound from time to time of a leaping fish, or a frog, or a muskrat, or turtle. It is even warmer, *methinks*, than it was in August, and it is perfectly clear, — the air. I know not how it is that this universal crickets' creak should sound thus regularly intermittent, as if for the most part they fell in with one another and creaked in time, making a certain pulsing sound, a sort of breathing or panting of all nature. You sit twenty feet above the still river; see the sheeny pads, and the moon, and some bare tree-tops in the distant horizon. Those bare tree-tops add greatly to the wildness.

Lower down I see the moon in the water as bright as in the heavens; only the water-bugs disturb its disk; and now I catch a faint glassy glare from the whole river surface, which before was simply dark. This is set in a frame of double darkness on the east, *i. e.* the reflected shore of woods and hills and the reality, the shadow and the substance, bipartite, answering to each.

I see the northern lights over my shoulder, to remind me of the Esquimaux and that they are still my contemporaries on this globe, that they too are taking their walks on another part of the planet, in pursuit

of seals, perchance.[1] The stars are dimly reflected in the water. The path of water-bugs in the moon's rays is like ripples of light. It is only when you stand fronting the sun or moon that you see their light reflected in the water. I hear no frogs these nights, — bullfrogs or others, — as in the spring. It is not the season of sound.

At Conantum end, just under the wall. From this point and at this height I do not perceive any bright or yellowish light on Fair Haven, but an oily and glass-like smoothness on its southwestern bay, through a very slight mistiness. Two or three pines appear to stand in the moonlit air on this side of the pond, while the enlightened portion of the water is bounded by the heavy reflection of the wood on the east. It was so soft and velvety a light as contained a thousand placid days sweetly put to rest in the bosom of the water. So looked the North Twin Lake in the Maine woods. It reminds me of placid lakes in the mid-noon of Indian summer days, but yet more placid and civilized, suggesting a higher cultivation, as the wild ever does, which æons of summer days have gone to make. Like a summer day seen far away. All the effects of sunlight, with a softer tone; and all this stillness of the water and the air superadded, and the witchery of the hour. What gods are they that require so fair a vase of gleaming water to their prospect in the midst of the wild woods by night? Else why this beauty allotted to night, a gem to sparkle in the zone of night? They are strange gods now out; methinks their names are not in any

[1] [Channing, p. 115.]

mythology.[1] I can faintly trace its zigzag border of sheeny pads even here. If such is then to be seen in remotest wildernesses, does it not suggest its own nymphs and wood gods to enjoy it? As when, at middle of the placid noon in Indian-summer days, all the surface of a lake is as one cobweb gleaming in the sun, which heaves gently to the passing zephyr. There was the lake, its glassy surface just distinguishable, its sheeny shore of pads, with a few pines bathed in light on its hither shore, just as in the middle of a November day, except that this was the chaster light of the moon, the cooler temperature of the night, and there were the deep shades of night that fenced it round and imbosomed. It tells of a far-away, long-passed civilization, of an antiquity superior to time, unappreciable by time.

Is there such virtue in raking cranberries that those men's industry whom I now see on the meadow shall reprove my idleness? Can I not go over those same meadows after them, and rake still more valuable fruits? Can I not rake with my mind? Can I not rake a thought, perchance, which shall be worth a bushel of cranberries?

A certain refinement and civilization in nature which increases with the wildness. The civilization that consists with wildness, the light that is in night. A smile as in a dream on the face of the sleeping lake. There is light enough to show what we see, what *night* has to exhibit. Any more would obscure these objects. I am not advertised of any deficiency of light.[2] The actual

[1] [Channing, p. 116.] [2] [Channing, p. 116.]

is fair as a vision or a dream. If ever we have attained to any nobleness, even in our imagination and intentions, that will surely ennoble the features of nature for us, that will clothe them with beauty. Of course no jeweller ever dealt with a gem so fair and suggestive as this actual lake, the scene, it may be, of so much noble and poetic life, and not merely [to] adorn some monarch's crown.

It is remarkably still at this hour and season. No sound of bird or beast for the most part. This has none of the reputed noxious qualities of night.

On the peak. The faint sounds of birds, dreaming aloud in the night, the fresh, cool air, and sound of the wind rushing over the rocks remind me of the tops of mountains. That is, all the earth is but the outside of the planet bordering on the hard-eyed sky. Equally withdrawn and near to heaven is this pasture as the summit of the White Mountains. All the earth's surface like a mountain-top, for I see its relation to heaven as simply, and am not imposed upon by a difference of a few feet in elevation. In this faint, hoary light, all fields are like a mossy rock and remote from the cultivated plains of day. All is equally savage, equally solitary and cool-aired, and the slight difference in elevation is felt to be unimportant. It is all one with Caucasus, the slightest hill pasture.

The basswood had a singularly solid look and sharply defined, as by a web or film, as if its leaves covered it like scales.

Scared up a whip-poor-will on the ground on the hill. Will not my townsmen consider me a benefactor if

I conquer some realms from the night, if I can show them that there is some beauty awake while they are asleep, if I add to the domains of poetry,[1] if I report to the gazettes anything transpiring in our midst worthy of man's attention? I will say nothing now to the disparagement of Day, for he is not here to defend himself.

The northern lights now, as I descend from the Conantum house, have become a crescent of light crowned with short, shooting flames, — or the shadows of flames, for sometimes they are dark as well as white. There is scarcely any dew even in the low lands.

Now the fire in the north increases wonderfully, not shooting up so much as creeping along, like a fire on the mountains of the north seen afar in the night. The Hyperborean gods are burning brush, and it spread, and all the hoes in heaven could n't stop it. It spread from west to east over the crescent hill. Like a vast fiery worm it lay across the northern sky, broken into many pieces; and each piece, with rainbow colors skirting it, strove to advance itself toward the east, worm-like, on its own annular muscles. It has spread into their choicest wood-lots. Now it shoots up like a single solitary watch-fire or burning bush, or where it ran up a pine tree like powder, and still it continues to gleam here and there like a fat stump in the burning, and is reflected in the water. And now I see the gods by great exertions have got it under, and the stars have come out without fear, in peace.

Though no birds sing, the crickets vibrate their shrill and stridulous cymbals, especially on the alders

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 323; Riv. 397, 398.]

of the causeway, those minstrels especially engaged for Night's quire.[1]

It takes some time to wear off the trivial impression which the day has made, and thus the first hours of night are sometimes lost.

There were two hen-hawks soared and circled for our entertainment, when we were in the woods on that Boon Plain the other day, crossing each other's orbits from time to time, alternating like the squirrels of the morning, till, alarmed by our imitation of a hawk's shrill cry, they gradually inflated themselves, made themselves more aerial, and rose higher and higher into the heavens, and were at length lost to sight; yet all the while earnestly looking, scanning the surface of the earth for a stray mouse or rabbit.[2]

Sept. 8. No fog this morning. Shall I not have words as fresh as my thoughts? Shall I use any other man's word? A genuine thought or feeling can find expression for itself, if it have to invent hieroglyphics. It has the universe for type-metal. It is for want of original thought that one man's style is like another's.

Certainly the voice of no bird or beast can be compared with that of man for true melody. All other sounds seem to be hushed, as if their possessors were attending, when the voice of man is heard in melody. The air gladly bears the burden. It is infinitely significant. Man only sings in concert. The bird's song is a mere

[1] [Channing, pp. 116, 117.]

[2] *Vide* back [p. 458].

interjectional shout of joy; man's a glorious expression of the foundations of his joy.

Do not the song of birds and the fireflies go with the grass? While the grass is fresh, the earth is in its vigor. The greenness of the grass is the best symptom or evidence of the earth's youth or health. Perhaps it will be found that when the grass ceases to be fresh and green, or after June, the birds have ceased to sing, and that the fireflies, too, no longer in *myriads* sparkle in the meadows. Perhaps a history of the year would be a history of the grass, or of a leaf, regarding the grass-blades as leaves, for it is equally true that the leaves soon lose their freshness and soundness, and become the prey of insects and of drought. Plants commonly soon cease to grow for the year, unless they may have a fall growth, which is a kind of second spring. In the feelings of the man, too, the year is already past, and he looks forward to the coming winter. His occasional rejuvenescence and faith in the current time is like the aftermath, a scanty crop. The enterprise which he has not already undertaken cannot be undertaken this year. The period of youth is past. The year may be in its summer, in its manhood, but it is no longer in the flower of its age. It is a season of withering, of dust and heat, a season of small fruits and trivial experiences. Summer thus answers to manhood. But there is an aftermath in early autumn, and some spring flowers bloom again, followed by an Indian summer of finer atmosphere and of a pensive beauty. May my life be not destitute of its Indian summer, a season of fine and clear, mild weather in which I may prolong my hunting be-

fore the winter comes, when I may once more lie on the ground with faith, as in spring, and even with more serene confidence. And then I will [wrap the] drapery of summer about me and lie down to pleasant dreams. As one year passes into another through the medium of winter, so does this our life pass into another through the medium of death.

De Quincey and Dickens have not moderation enough. They never stutter; they flow too readily.

The tree-primrose and the dwarf ditto and epilobium still. Locust is heard. *Aster amplexicaulis*, beautiful blue, purplish blue (?), about twenty-four rayed. *Utricularia vulgaris*, bladderwort. Dandelion and houstonia.

Sept. 9. 2 A. M. — The moon not quite full. To Conantum *via* road.

There is a low vapor in the meadows beyond the depot, dense and white, though scarcely higher than a man's head, concealing the stems of the trees. I see that the oaks, which are so dark and distinctly outlined, are illumined by the moon on the opposite side. This as I go up the back road. A few thin, ineffectual clouds in the sky. I come out thus into the moonlit night, where men are not, as if into a scenery anciently deserted by men. The life of men is like a dream. It is three thousand years since night has had possession. Go forth and hear the crickets chirp at midnight. Hear if their dynasty is not an ancient one and well founded. I feel the antiquity of the night. She surely repossesses herself of her realms, as if her dynasty were uninter-

rupted, or she had underlain the day. No sounds but the steady creaking of crickets and the occasional crowing of cocks.

I go by the farmer's houses and barns, standing there in the dim light under the trees, as if they lay at an immense distance or under a veil. The farmer and his oxen now all asleep. Not even a watch-dog awake. The human slumbers. There is less of man in the world.

The fog in the lowlands on the Corner road is never still. It now advances and envelops me as I stand to write these words, then clears away, with ever noiseless step. It covers the meadows like a web. I hear the clock strike three.

Now at the clayey bank. The light of Orion's belt seems to show traces of the blue day through which it came to us. The sky at least is lighter on that side than in the west, even about the moon. Even by night the sky is blue and not black, for we see through the veil of night into the distant atmosphere of day. I see to the plains of the sun, where the sunbeams are revelling. The cricket's (?) song, on the alders of the causeway, not quite so loud at this hour as at evening. The moon is getting low. I hear a wagon cross one of the bridges leading into the town. I see the moonlight at this hour on a different side of objects. I smell the ripe apples many rods off beyond the bridge. A sultry night; a thin coat is enough.

On the first top of Conantum. I hear the farmer harnessing his horse and starting for the distant market, but no man harnesses himself, and starts for worthier

enterprises. One cock-crow tells the whole story of the farmer's life. The moon is now sinking into clouds in the horizon. I see the glow-worms deep in the grass by the little brookside in midst of Conantum. The moon shines dun and red. A solitary whip-poor-will sings.

The clock strikes four. A few dogs bark. A few more wagons start for market, their faint rattling heard in the distance. I hear my owl without a name; the murmur of the slow-approaching freight-train, as far off, perchance, as Waltham; and one early bird.

The round, red moon disappearing in the west. I detect a whiteness in the east. Some dark, massive clouds have come over from the west within the hour, as if attracted by the approaching sun, and have arranged themselves raywise about the eastern portal, as if to bar his coming. They have moved suddenly and almost unobservedly quite across the sky (which before was clear) from west to east. No trumpet was heard which marshalled and advanced these dark masses of the west's forces thus rapidly against the coming day. Column after column the mighty west sent forth across the sky while men slept, but all in vain.

The eastern horizon is now grown dun-colored, showing where the advanced guard of the night are already skirmishing with the vanguard of the sun, a lurid light tingeing the atmosphere there, while a dark-columned cloud hangs imminent over the broad portal, untouched by the glare. Some bird flies over, making a noise like the barking of a puppy.[1] It is yet so dark that I have dropped my pencil and cannot find it.

[1] It was a cuckoo.

The sound of the cars is like that of a rushing wind. They come on slowly. I thought at first a morning wind was rising. And now (perchance at half-past four) I hear the sound of some far-off factory-bell arousing the operatives to their early labors. It sounds very sweet here. It is very likely some factory which I have never seen, in some valley which I have never visited; yet now I hear this, which is its only matin bell, sweet and inspiring as if it summoned holy men and maids to worship and not factory girls and men to resume their trivial toil, as if it were the summons of some religious or even poetic community. My first impression is that it is the matin bell of some holy community who in a distant valley dwell, a band of spiritual knights, — thus sounding far and wide, sweet and sonorous, in harmony with their own morning thoughts. What else could I suppose fitting this earth and hour? Some man of high resolve, devoted soul, has touched the rope; and by its peals how many men and maids are waked from peaceful slumbers to fragrant morning thoughts! Why should I fear to tell that it is Knight's factory-bell at Assabet? A few melodious peals and all is still again.

The whip-poor-wills now begin to sing in earnest about half an hour before sunrise, as if making haste to improve the short time that is left them. As far as my observation goes, they sing for several hours in the early part of the night, are silent commonly at midnight, — though you may meet [them] then sitting on a rock or flitting silently about, — then sing again just before sunrise. It grows more and more red in the east — a

fine-grained red under the overhanging cloud — and lighter too, and the threatening clouds are falling off to southward of the sun's passage, shrunken and defeated, leaving his path comparatively clear. The increased light shows more distinctly the river and the fog.

5 o'clock. — The light now reveals a thin film of vapor like a gossamer veil cast over the lower hills beneath the Cliffs and stretching to the river, thicker in the ravines, thinnest on the even slopes. The distant meadows towards the north beyond Conant's Grove, full of fog, appear like a vast lake out of which rise Annursnack and Ponkawtasset like rounded islands. Nawshawtuct is a low and wooded isle, scarcely seen above the waves. The heavens are now clear again. The vapor, which was confined to the river and meadows, now rises and creeps up the sides of the hills. I see it in transparent columns advancing down the valley of the river, ghost-like, from Fair Haven, and investing some wooded or rocky promontory, before free. So ghosts are said to advance.

Annursnack is exactly like some round, steep, distant hill on the opposite shore of a large lake (and Tabor on the other side), with here and there some low Brush Island in middle of the waves (the tops of some oaks or elms). Oh, what a sail I could take, if I had the right kind of bark, over to Annursnack! for there she lies four miles from land as sailors say. And all the farms and houses of Concord are at bottom of that sea. So I forget them, and my thought sails triumphantly over them. As I looked down where the village of Concord lay buried in fog, I thought of nothing but the surface of

a lake, a summer sea over which to sail; no more than a voyager on the Dead Sea who had not read the Testament would think of Sodom and Gomorrah, once cities of the plain. I only wished to get off to one of the low isles I saw in midst of the [sea] (it may have been the top of Holbrook's elm), and spend the whole summer day there.

Meanwhile the redness in the east had diminished and was less deep. (The fog over some meadows looked green.) I went down to Tupelo Cliff to bathe. A great bittern, which I had scared, flew heavily across the stream. The redness had risen at length above the dark cloud, the sun approaching. And next the redness became a sort of yellowish or fawn-colored light, and the sun now set fire to the edges of the broken cloud which had hung over the horizon, and they glowed like burning turf.

Sept. 10. As I watch the groves on the meadow opposite our house, I see how differently they look at different hours of the day, *i. e.* in different lights, when the sun shines on them variously. In the morning, perchance, they seem one blended mass of light green. In the afternoon, distinct trees appear, separated by heavy shadows, and in some places I can see quite through the grove.

3 P. M. — To the Cliffs and the Grape Cliff beyond.

Hardhack and meadow-sweet are now all dry. I see the smoke of burning brush in the west horizon this dry and sultry afternoon, and wish to look off from some hill. It is a kind of work the farmer cannot do

without discovery. Sometimes I smell these smokes several miles off, and by the odor know it is not a burning building, but withered leaves and the rubbish of the woods and swamp. As I go through the woods, I see that the ferns have turned brown and give the woods an autumnal look. The boiling spring is almost completely dry. Nothing flows (I mean without the shed), but there are many hornets and yellow wasps apparently buzzing and circling about in jealousy of one another, either drinking the stagnant water, which is the most accessible this dry parching day, or it may be collecting something from the slime, — I think the former.

As I go up Fair Haven Hill, I see some signs of the approaching fall of the white pine. On some trees the old leaves are already somewhat reddish, though not enough to give the trees a parti-colored look, and they come off easily on being touched, — the old leaves on the lower part of the twigs.

Some farmers are sowing their winter rye? I see the fields smoothly rolled. (I hear the locust still.) I see others plowing steep rocky and bushy fields, apparently for the same purpose. How beautiful the sprout-land (burnt plain) seen from the Cliff! No more cheering and inspiring sight than a young wood springing up thus over a large tract, when you look down on it, the light green of the maples shaded off into the darker oaks; and here and there a maple blushes quite red, enlivening the scene yet more. Surely this earth is fit to be inhabited, and many enterprises may be undertaken with hope where so many young plants are pushing up. In the spring I burned over a hundred acres till the

earth was sere and black, and by midsummer this space was clad in a fresher and more luxuriant green than the surrounding even. Shall man then despair? Is he not a sprout-land too, after never so many searings and witherings? [1] If you witness growth and luxuriance, it is all the same as if you grew luxuriantly.

I see three smokes in Stow. One sends up dark volumes of wreathed smoke, as if from the mouth of Erebus. It is remarkable what effects so thin and subtile a substance as smoke produces, even at a distance, — dark and heavy and powerful as rocks at a distance.

The woodbine is red on the rocks.

The poke is a very rich and striking plant. Some which stand under the Cliffs quite dazzled me with their now purple stems gracefully drooping each way, their rich, somewhat yellowish, purple-veined leaves, their bright purple racemes, — peduncles, and pedicels, and calyx-like petals from which the birds have picked the berries (these racemes, with their petals now turned to purple, are more brilliant than anything of the kind), — flower-buds, flowers, ripe berries and dark purple ones, and calyx-like petals which have lost their fruit, all on the same plant. I love to see any redness in the vegetation of the temperate zone. It is the richest color. I love to press these berries between my fingers and see their rich purple wine staining my hand. It asks a bright sun on it to make it show to best advantage, and it must be seen at this season of the year. It speaks to my blood. Every part of it is flower, such is its superfluity of color, — a feast of color. That is the richest flower which

[1] [Channing, p. 217]

most abounds in color. What need to taste the fruit, to drink the wine, to him who can thus taste and drink with his eyes? Its boughs, gracefully drooping, offering repasts to the birds. It is cardinal in its rank, as in its color. Nature here is full of blood and heat and luxuriance. What a triumph it appears in Nature to have produced and perfected such a plant, — as if this were enough for a summer.[1]

The downy seeds of the groundsel are taking their flight here. The calyx has dismissed them and quite curled back, having done its part. *Lespedeza sessiliflora*, or reticulated lespedeza on the Cliffs now out of bloom. At the Grape Cliff, the few bright-red leaves of the tupelo contrast with the polished green ones. The tupelos with drooping branches.

The grape-vines overrunning and bending down the maples form little arching bowers over the meadow, five or six feet in diameter, like parasols held over the ladies of the harem, in the East. *Cuscuta Americana*, or dodder, in blossom still. The *Desmodium paniculatum* of De Candolle and Gray (*Hedysarum paniculatum* of Linnæus and Bigelow), tick-trefoil, with still one blossom, by the path-side up from the meadow. The rhomboidal joints of its loments adhere to my clothes. One of an interesting family that thus disperse themselves. The oak-ball of dirty drab now.[2]

Sept. 11. Every artisan learns positively something by his trade. Each craft is familiar with a few simple,

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 253–255; Riv. 311, 312.]

[2] [Channing, pp. 216, 217.]

well-known, well-established facts, not requiring any genius to discover, but mere use and familiarity. You may go by the man at his work in the street every day of your life, and though he is there before you, carrying into practice certain essential information, you shall never be the wiser. Each trade is in fact a craft, a cunning, a covering an ability; and its methods are the result of a long experience. There sits a stone-mason, splitting Westford granite for fence-posts. Egypt has perchance taught New England something in this matter. His hammer, his chisels, his wedges, his shims or half-rounds, his iron spoon, — I suspect that these tools are hoary with age as with granite dust. He learns as easily where the best granite comes from as he learns how to erect that screen to keep off the sun. He knows that he can drill faster into a large stone than a small one, because there is less jar and yielding. He deals in stone as the carpenter in lumber. In many of his operations only the materials are different. His work is slow and expensive. Nature is here hard to be overcome. He wears up one or two drills in splitting a single stone. He must sharpen his tools oftener than the carpenter. He fights with granite. He knows the temper of the rocks. He grows stony himself. His tread is ponderous and steady like the fall of a rock. And yet by patience and art he splits a stone as surely as the carpenter or woodcutter a log. So much time and perseverance will accomplish. One would say that mankind had much less moral than physical energy, that any day you see men following the trade of splitting rocks, who yet shrink from undertaking apparently less

arduous moral labors, the solving of moral problems. See how surely he proceeds. He does not hesitate to drill a dozen holes, each one the labor of a day or two for a savage; he carefully takes out the dust with his iron spoon; he inserts his wedges, one in each hole, and protects the sides of the holes and gives resistance to his wedges by thin pieces of half-round iron (or shims); he marks the red line which he has drawn, with his chisel, carefully cutting it straight; and then how carefully he drives each wedge in succession, fearful lest he should not have a good split!

The habit of looking at men in the gross makes their lives have less of human interest for us. But though there are crowds of laborers before us, yet each one leads his little epic life each day. There is the stone-mason, who, methought, was simply a stony man that hammered stone from breakfast to dinner, and dinner to supper, and then went to his slumbers. But he, I find, is even a man like myself, for he feels the heat of the sun and has raised some boards on a frame to protect him. And now, at mid-forenoon, I see his wife and child have come and brought him drink and meat for his lunch and to assuage the stoniness of his labor, and sit to chat with him.

There are many rocks lying there for him to split from end to end, and he will surely do it. This only at the command of luxury, since stone posts are preferred to wood. But how many moral blocks are lying there in every man's yard, which he surely will not split nor earnestly endeavor to split. There lie the blocks which will surely get split, but here lie the blocks which will

surely not get split. Do we say it is too hard for human faculties? But does not the mason dull a basketful of steel chisels in a day, and yet, by sharpening them again and tempering them aright, succeed? Moral effort! Difficulty to be overcome!!! Why, men work in stone, and sharpen their drills when they go home to dinner!

Why should Canada, wild and unsettled as it is, impress one as an older country than the States, except that her institutions are old. All things seem to contend there with a certain rust of antiquity, such as forms on old armor and iron guns, the rust of conventions and formalities. If the rust was not on the tinned roofs and spires, it was on the inhabitants.[1]

2 P. M. — To Hubbard's Meadow Grove.

The skunk-cabbage's checkered fruit (spadix), one three inches long; all parts of the flower but the anthers left and enlarged. *Bidens cernua*, or nodding burr-marigold, like a small sunflower (with rays) in Heywood Brook, *i. e.* beggar-tick. *Bidens connata* (?), without rays, in Hubbard's Meadow. Blue-eyed grass still. Drooping neottia very common. I see some yellow butterflies and others occasionally and singly only. The smilax berries are mostly turned dark. I started a great bittern from the weeds at the swimming-place.

It is very hot and dry weather. We have had no rain for a week, and yet the pitcher-plants have water in them. Are they ever quite dry? Are they not replenished by the dews always, and, being shaded by the

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 80, 81; Riv. 100.]

grass, saved from evaporation? What wells for the birds!

The white-red-purple-berried bush in Hubbard's Meadow, whose berries were fairest a fortnight ago, appears to be the *Viburnum nudum*, or withe-rod. Our cornel (the common) with berries blue one side, whitish the other, appears to be either the *Cornus sericea* or *C. stolonifera* of Gray, *i. e.* the silky, or the red-osier cornel (*osier rouge*), though its leaves are neither silky nor downy nor rough.

This and the last four or five nights have been perhaps the most sultry in the year thus far.

Sept. 12. Not till after 8 A. M. does the fog clear off so much that I see the sun shining in patches on Nawshawtuct. This is the season of fogs.

Like knight, like esquire. When Benvenuto Cellini was attacked by the constables in Rome, his boy Cencio assisted him, or at least stood by, and afterward related his master's exploits; "and as they asked him several times whether he had been afraid, he answered that they should propose the question to me, for he had been affected upon the occasion just in the same manner that I was."

Benvenuto Cellini relates in his memoirs that, during his confinement in the castle of St. Angelo in Rome, he had a terrible dream or vision in which certain events were communicated to him which afterward came to pass, and he adds: "From the very moment that I beheld the phenomenon, there appeared (strange to relate!) a resplendent light over my head, which has dis-

played itself conspicuously to all that I have thought proper to show it to, but those were very few. This shining light is to be seen in the morning over my shadow till two o'clock in the afternoon, and it appears to the greatest advantage when the grass is moist with dew: it is likewise visible in the evening at sunset. This phenomenon I took notice of when I was at Paris, because the air is exceedingly clear in that climate, so that I could distinguish it there much plainer than in Italy, where mists are much more frequent; but I can still see it even here, and show it to others, though not to the same advantage as in France." This reminds me of the halo around my shadow which I notice from the causeway in the morning, — also by moonlight, — as if, in the case of a man of an excitable imagination, this were basis enough for his superstition.[1]

After I have spent the greater part of a night abroad in the moonlight, I am obliged to sleep enough more the next night to make up for it, — *Endymionis somnum dormire* (to sleep an Endymion sleep), as the ancients expressed it.[2] And there is something gained still by thus turning the day into night. Endymion is said to have obtained of Jupiter the privilege of sleeping as much as he would. Let no man be afraid of sleep, if his weariness comes of obeying his Genius. He who has spent the night with the gods sleeps more innocently by day than the sluggard who has spent the day with the satyrs sleeps by night. He who has travelled to fairyland in the night sleeps by day more innocently

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 224, 225; Riv. 316, 317.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 331; Riv. 407.]

than he who is fatigued by the merely trivial labors of the day sleeps by night. That kind of life which, sleeping, we dream that we live awake, in our walks by night, we, waking, live, while our daily life appears as a dream.

2 P. M. — To the Three Friends' Hill beyond Flint's Pond, *via* railroad, R. W. E.'s wood-path south side Walden, George Heywood's cleared lot, and Smith's orchard; return *via* east of Flint's Pond, *via* Goose Pond and my old home to railroad.

I go to Flint's Pond for the sake of the mountain view from the hill beyond, looking over Concord. I have thought it the best, especially in the winter, which I can get in this neighborhood. It is worth the while to see the mountains in the horizon once a day. I have thus seen some earth which corresponds to my least earthly and trivial, to my most heavenward-looking, thoughts. The earth seen through an azure, an ethereal, veil. They are the natural *temples*, elevated brows, of the earth, looking at which, the thoughts of the beholder are naturally elevated and sublimed, — etherealized. I wish to see the earth through the medium of much air or heaven, for there is no paint like the air. Mountains thus seen are worthy of worship. I go to Flint's Pond also to see a rippling lake and a reedy island in its midst, — Reed Island. A man should feed his senses with the best that the land affords.[1]

At the entrance to the Deep Cut, I heard the telegraph-wire vibrating like an æolian harp. It reminded me suddenly, — reservedly, with a beautiful paucity

[1] [Channing, p. 163.]

of communication, even silently, such was its effect on my thoughts, — it reminded me, I say, with a certain pathetic moderation, of what finer and deeper stirrings I was susceptible, which grandly set all argument and dispute aside, a triumphant though transient exhibition of the truth. It told me by the faintest imaginable strain, it told me by the finest strain that a human ear can hear, yet conclusively and past all refutation, that there were higher, infinitely higher, planes of life which it behooved me never to forget. As I was entering the Deep Cut, the wind, which was conveying a message to me from heaven, dropped it on the wire of the telegraph which it vibrated as it passed. I instantly sat down on a stone at the foot of the telegraph-pole, and attended to the communication. It merely said: "Bear in mind, Child, and never for an instant forget, that there are higher planes, infinitely higher planes, of life than this thou art now travelling on. Know that the goal is distant, and is upward, and is worthy all your life's efforts to attain to." And then it ceased, and though I sat some minutes longer I heard nothing more.

There is every variety and degree of inspiration from mere fullness of life to the most rapt mood. A human soul is played on even as this wire, which now vibrates slowly and gently so that the passer can hardly hear it, and anon the sound swells and vibrates with such intensity as if it would rend the wire, as far as the elasticity and tension of the wire permits, and now it dies away and is silent, and though the breeze continues to sweep over it, no strain comes from it, and the traveller hearkens in vain. It is no small gain to have

this wire stretched through Concord, though there may be no office here. Thus I make my own use of the telegraph, without consulting the directors, like the sparrows, which I perceive use it extensively for a perch. Shall I not go to this office to hear if there is any communication for me, as steadily as to the post-office in the village? [1]

I can hardly believe that there is so great a difference between one year and another as my journal shows. The 11th of this month last year, the river was as high as it commonly is in the spring, over the causeway on the Corner road. It is now quite low. Last year, October 9th, the huckleberries were fresh and abundant on Conantum. They are now already dried up.

We yearn to see the mountains daily, as the Israelites yearned for the promised land, and we daily live the fate of Moses, who only looked into the promised land from Pisgah before he died.

On Monday, the 15th instant, I am going to perambulate the bounds of the town. As I am partial to across-lot routes, this appears to be a very proper duty for me to perform, for certainly no route can well be chosen which shall be more across-lot, since the roads in no case run round the town but ray out from its centre, and my course will lie across each one. It is almost as if I had undertaken to walk round the town at the greatest distance from its centre and at the same time from the surrounding villages. There is no public house near the line. It is a sort of reconnoissance of its frontiers authorized by the central government of the town,

[1] [Channing, pp. 199, 200.]

which will bring the surveyor in contact with whatever wild inhabitant or wilderness its territory embraces.

This appears to be a very ancient custom, and I find that this word "perambulation" has exactly the same meaning that it has at present in Johnson and Walker's dictionary. A hundred years ago they went round the towns of this State every three years. And the old selectmen tell me that, before the present split stones were set up in 1829, the bounds were marked by a heap of stones, and it was customary for each selectman to add a stone to the heap.

Saw a pigeon-place on George Heywood's cleared lot, — the six dead trees set up for the pigeons to alight on, and the brush house close by to conceal the man. I was rather startled to find such a thing going now in Concord. The pigeons on the trees looked like fabulous birds with their long tails and their pointed breasts. I could hardly believe they were alive and not some wooden birds used for decoys, they sat so still; and, even when they moved their necks, I thought it was the effect of art. As they were not catching then, I approached and scared away a dozen birds who were perched on the trees, and found that they were freshly baited there, though the net was carried away, perchance to some other bed. The smooth sandy bed was covered with buckwheat, wheat or rye, and acorns. Sometimes they use corn, shaved off the ear in its present state with a knife. There were left the sticks with which they fastened the nets. As I stood there, I heard a rushing sound and, looking up, saw a flock of thirty or forty pigeons dashing toward the *trees*, who suddenly

whirled on seeing me and circled round and made a new dash toward the bed, as if they would fain alight if I had not been there, then steered off. I crawled into the bough house and lay awhile looking through the leaves, hoping to see them come again and feed, but they did not while I stayed. This net and bed belong to one Harrington of Weston, as I hear. Several men still take pigeons in Concord every year; by a method, methinks, extremely old and which I seem to have seen pictured in some old book of fables or symbols, and yet few in Concord know exactly how it is done. And yet it is all done for money and because the birds fetch a good price, just as the farmers raise corn and potatoes. I am always expecting that those engaged in such a pursuit will be somewhat less grovelling and mercenary than the regular trader or farmer, but I fear that it is not so.

Found a violet, apparently *Viola cucullata*, or hood-leaved violet, in bloom in Baker's Meadow beyond Pine Hill; also the *Bidens cernua*, nodding burr-marigold, with five petals, in same place. Went through the old corn-field on the hillside beyond, now grown up to birches and hickories, — woods where you feel the old corn-hills under your feet; for these, not being disturbed or levelled in getting the crop, like potato-hills, last an indefinite while; and by some they are called Indian corn-fields, though I think erroneously, not only from their position in rocky soil frequently, but because the squaws probably, with their clamshells or thin stones or wooden hoes, did not hill their corn more than many now recommend.

What we call woodbine is the *Vitis hederacea*, or common creeper, or American ivy.

When I got into the Lincoln road, I perceived a singular sweet scent in the air, which I suspected arose from some plant now in a peculiar state owing to the season, but though I smelled everything around, I could not detect it, but the more eagerly I smelled, the further I seemed to be from finding it; but when I gave up the search, again it would be wafted to me. It was one of the sweet scents which go to make the autumn air, which fed my sense of smell rarely and dilated my nostrils. I felt the better for it. Methinks that I possess the sense of smell in greater perfection than usual, and have the habit of smelling of every plant I pluck. How autumnal is the scent of ripe grapes now by the roadside! [1]

From the pond-side hill I perceive that the forest leaves begin to look rather rusty or brown. The pendulous, drooping barberries are pretty well reddened. I am glad when the berries look fair and plump. I love to gaze at the low island in the pond, — at any island or inaccessible land. The isle at which you look always seems fairer than the mainland on which you stand.

I had already bathed in Walden as I passed, but now I forgot that I had been wetted, and wanted to embrace and mingle myself with the water of Flint's Pond this warm afternoon, to get wet inwardly and deeply.

Found on the shore of the pond that singular willow-like herb in blossom, though its petals were gone. It grows up two feet from a large woody horizontal root,

[1] [Channing, p. 217.]

and droops over to the sand again, meeting which, it puts out a myriad rootlets from the side of its stem, fastens itself, and curves upward again to the air, thus spanning or looping itself along. The bark just above the ground thickens into a singular cellular or spongy substance, which at length appears to crack nearer the earth, giving that part of the plant a winged and somewhat four-sided appearance. It appears to be the cellular tissue, or what is commonly called the green bark, and likewise invests the root to a great thickness, somewhat like a fungus, and is of a fawn-color. The *Lythrum verticillatum*, or swamp loosestrife, or grass poly, but I think better named, as in Dewey, swamp-willow-herb.

The prinos berries are pretty red. Any redness like cardinal-flowers, or poke, or the evening sky, or cheronæa, excites us as a red flag does cows and turkeys.

Sept. 13. Railroad causeway, before sunrise.

Here is a morning after a warm, clear, moonlight night almost entirely without dew or fog. It has been a little breezy through the night, it is true; but why so great a difference between this and other mornings of late? I can walk in any direction in the fields without wetting my feet.

I see the same rays in the dun, buff, or fawn-colored sky now, just twenty minutes before sunrise, though they do not extend quite so far as at sundown the other night. Why these rays? What is it divides the light of the sun? Is it thus divided by distant inequalities in the surface of the earth, behind which the other parts are concealed, and since the morning atmosphere is

clearer they do not reach so far? Some small island clouds are the first to look red.

The cross-leaved polygala emits its fragrance as if at will. You are quite sure you smelled it and are ravished with its sweet fragrance, but now it has no smell. You must not hold it too near, but hold it on all sides and at all distances, and there will perchance be wafted to you sooner or later a very sweet and penetrating fragrance. What it is like you cannot surely tell, for you do not enjoy it long enough nor in volume enough to compare it. It is very likely that you will not discover any fragrance while you are rudely smelling at it; you can only remember that you once perceived it. Both this and the caducous polygala are now somewhat faded.

Now the sun is risen. The sky is almost perfectly clear this morning; not a cloud in the horizon. The morning is not pensive like the evening, but joyous and youthful, and its blush is soon gone. It is unfallen day. The Bedford sunrise bell rings sweetly and musically at this hour, when there is no bustle in the village to drown it. Bedford deserves a vote of thanks from Concord for it. It is a great good at these still and sacred hours, when towns can hear each other. It would be nought at noon.

Sept. 14. A great change in the weather from sultry to cold, from one thin coat to a thick coat or two thin ones.

2 P. M. — To Cliffs.

The dry grass yields a crisped sound to my feet. The

white oak which appears to have made part of a hedge fence once, now standing in Hubbard's fence near the Corner road, where it stretches along horizontally, is (one of its arms, for it has one running each way) two and a half feet thick, with a sprout growing perpendicularly out of it eighteen inches in diameter. The corn-stalks standing in stacks, in long rows along the edges of the corn-fields, remind me of stacks of muskets.

As soon as berries are gone, grapes come. The chalices of the *Rhexia Virginica*, deer-grass or meadow-beauty, are literally little reddish chalices now, though many still have petals, — little cream pitchers.[1] The caducous polygala in cool places is faded almost white. I see the river at the foot of Fair Haven Hill running up-stream before the strong cool wind, which here strikes it from the north. The cold wind makes me shudder after my bath, before I get dressed.

Polygonum aviculare — knot-grass, goose-grass, or door-grass — still in bloom.

Sept. 15. *Monday.* Ice in the pail under the pump, and quite a frost.

Commenced perambulating the town bounds. At 7.30 A. M. rode in company with —— and Mr. —— to the bound between Acton and Concord near Paul Dudley's. Mr. —— told a story of his wife walking in the fields somewhere, and, to keep the rain off, throwing her gown over her head and holding it in her mouth, and so being poisoned about her mouth from the skirts of her dress having come in contact with poisonous plants.

[1] [Channing, p. 222.]

At Dudley's, which house is handsomely situated, with five large elms in front, we met the selectmen of Acton, —— —— and —— ——. Here were five of us. It appeared that we weighed, — —— I think about 160, —— 155, —— about 140, —— 130, myself 127. —— described the wall about or at Forest Hills Cemetery in Roxbury as being made of stones upon which they were careful to preserve the moss, so that it cannot be distinguished from a very old wall.

Found one intermediate bound-stone near the powder-mill drying-house on the bank of the river. The workmen there wore shoes without iron tacks. He said that the kernel-house was the most dangerous, the drying-house next, the press-house next. One of the powder-mill buildings in Concord? The potato vines and the beans which were still green are now blackened and flattened by the frost.

END OF VOLUME II

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